



# CTC SENTINEL

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## About the CTC Sentinel

The Combating Terrorism Center is an independent educational and research institution based in the Department of Social Sciences at the United States Military Academy, West Point. The CTC Sentinel harnesses the Center's global network of scholars and practitioners to understand and confront contemporary threats posed by terrorism and other forms of political violence.

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and not of the U.S. Military Academy, the Department of the Army, or any other agency of the U.S. Government.

# The Strengths and Weaknesses of Jihadist Ideology

By Nelly Lahoud



The site of a suicide bomb attack in Quetta on September 3, 2010. - Photo by Banaras Khan/AFP/Getty Images

**T**HE CENTRAL ARGUMENT espoused by jihadist ideologues and leaders is that the Muslim world is plagued by grievances and injustices, many of which are caused by the West. According to their logic, the United States and corrupt, oppressive Muslim regimes are two sides of the same coin. Jihadist leaders warn Muslims not to fall for Western "deceptive" ideas such as democracy and human rights because they are designed to divert the *umma* (Islamic community) from jihad and ultimately paralyze it. Ayman al-Zawahiri, for example, asserts that the United States has only achieved its interests "by spreading oppression and terrorism at the hands of its [Islamic] allies."<sup>1</sup> According to al-Zawahiri, Western civilization sings the praises of

human rights and liberties as long as such singing serves and benefits its interests.<sup>2</sup> Jihadists have thus determined that jihad is the only path toward genuine change in this world and divine reward in the hereafter. Their jihad, they claim, is to fight to make God's Law supreme on earth. Only then can all Muslims, rulers and citizenry, be equally accountable to God's Law.

In view of the prevalence of "Islamic" expressions in contemporary political discourse, it is critical to distinguish between Islamists and jihadists. Islamists—who share with jihadists the belief that Islamic teachings of social justice are the solution to the malaise Muslims face today—operate within the

<sup>1</sup> Ayman al-Zawahiri, "al-Badil huwa al-da'wa wa-al-jihad," *Minbar al-Tawhid wa-al-Jihad*, undated, available at [www.tawhed.ws/r?i=8vp6jsjy](http://www.tawhed.ws/r?i=8vp6jsjy).

<sup>2</sup> Ayman al-Zawahiri made this statement in an interview with al-Sahab, conducted four years after the attacks of 9/11. The interview is available at [www.tawhed.ws/r?i=f3rahg23](http://www.tawhed.ws/r?i=f3rahg23).

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political processes of the nation-state; they often form political parties and advance their agenda through contesting elections. By contrast, jihadists reject the world order of nation-states, believing it to be a continuation of Western imperialism through other means. This extends to their rejection of political notions such as national sovereignty and any regional or international institutions (such as the Arab League or the United Nations).

Jihadists have instead opted for a paradigm exclusively defined by religious principles. Given their rejection of the legitimacy of national and international political norms and institutions, a religious paradigm allows the jihadists to find alternative sources of legitimacy that would make it lawful, in their eyes, to transcend and indeed violate the laws of their home regimes and those of the international community. Such an ideology, as articulated by its adherents, has its strengths, but also harbors within itself the seeds of its own destruction.

#### The Strengths of Jihadist Ideology

There are three key features that lend themselves to advancing the cause of jihadism: 1) an idealistic commitment to a righteous cause; 2) individualism in interpreting religion; and 3) the conviction that Muslims today are engaged in defensive warfare (*jihad al-daf'*), making their jihad not just lawful but an individual duty incumbent upon each one of them.

#### Idealism

Jihadist ideologues project a commitment to a righteous cause. They claim that their battle is waged in the service of God; it is not contaminated with ephemeral interests. The loyalty of the jihadists is to God alone, not to leaders or states. They love what He loves and hate what He hates. This form of loyalty underpins the bonding mechanisms that are meant to unite jihadists, namely the paradigm of *wala'* and *bara'*: *wala'* refers to the loyalty jihadists must have toward those, who, like them, love God's friends and hate His enemies; *bara'* refers to those from whom jihadists must dissociate because they have compromised God's Law by putting worldly concerns ahead of divine

commands.<sup>3</sup> In political parlance, *wala'* and *bara'* constitute the jihadists' "social/global contract," designating those who are "in" from those who are "out." Yet in their case, loyalty is not subject to the exclusive bureaucratic processes of

**"This individualist disposition to interpreting religion empowers the believer to serve God directly, freeing him from conforming to what jihadist leaders and ideologues regard as the infidelity of their political and religious authorities."**

the state, as jihadism does not define categories comparable to "refugee," "illegal immigrant," or "alien." Instead, every person, irrespective of status, color, gender or origin could potentially be accepted into the jihadist community on the basis of embracing the common creed. In principle, the process of becoming a jihadist is far simpler than acquiring the citizenship of a state.

#### Individualism in Interpreting Religion

Jihadists yearn for the time when they, confident that they are the true believers, can be united under the leadership of a genuine Muslim figure (*amir al-mu'minin*), who governs according to *Shari'a*. Yet not only do they believe that Muslim leaders today do not govern according to the justice of Islam, but they are equally distrustful of religious scholars and officials who are perceived to have any ties to the political establishment. Usama bin Ladin, for instance, is adamant that "no official scholar's juridical decrees have any value as far as I'm concerned."<sup>4</sup> Similarly, Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi wrote a treatise whose purpose is to forbid Muslims to attend state-funded *madrasas* to shield

3 Ayman al-Zawahiri, "al-Wala' wa-al-Bara," *Minbar al-Tawhid wa-al-Jihad*, undated, available at [www.tawhed.ws/r?i=xotaOud8](http://www.tawhed.ws/r?i=xotaOud8).

4 Usama bin Ladin, "The Example of Vietnam," in Bruce Lawrence ed., *Messages to the World: The Statements of Osama bin Laden* (New York: Verso, 2005), p. 141.

would-be jihadists from the influence of traditional religious scholars.<sup>5</sup> This individualist disposition to interpreting religion empowers the believer to serve God directly, freeing him from conforming to what jihadist leaders and ideologues regard as the infidelity of their political and religious authorities.

#### *Jihad as an Individual Duty (fard `ayn)*

Jihadist ideologues stress that they are engaged in defensive jihad and draw on the classical/medieval defensive doctrine of jihad to argue that jihad today is the individual duty of every Muslim. The classical jurists who developed the defensive doctrine of jihad envisaged it would only apply under extraordinary circumstances when Muslims are under attack in their own territory and therefore did not have the luxury to seek permission to defend themselves. They thus made it lawful for Muslims to take up jihad on their own initiative without awaiting the orders or permissions of any religious, political, parental or spousal authority.

Jihadist ideologues have molded this classical legal doctrine of warfare into a contemporary global military program. They believe that today's jihad is not simply to repel a territorial attack. Instead, jihad is against both their own regimes (the near enemy) and the West (the far enemy); they have declared their own regimes to be in apostasy from Islam and are fighting against them because they do not govern according to *Shari'a*, and they are fighting certain states in the West because they lend support to their "apostate" rulers. This popularization of the defensive legal doctrine of jihad by jihadist ideologues has broken down the barriers between the individual, especially the youth, and any authority that might prevent that person from joining, in the words of `Abdullah `Azzam, the "caravan of jihad."<sup>6</sup> In essence, this doctrine allows jihadists to transcend the authority of the state and undermines any form of hierarchy or authority that may stand between the militant believer and jihad.

5 Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, "Idad al-Qada al-Fawaris bi-Hajr Fasad al-Madaris," *Minbar al-Tawhid wa-al-Jihad*, undated, available at [www.tawhed.ws/a?2qrkosd](http://www.tawhed.ws/a?2qrkosd).

6 `Abdullah `Azzam was instrumental in popularizing this doctrine to mobilize Muslims to fight in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union.

### The Weaknesses of Jihadist Ideology

Notwithstanding the republican egalitarianism discernible in the aspirations of some jihadist leaders, their exclusive appeal to religious principles has rendered jihadism vulnerable to the limitations that a religious principle imposes if narrowly interpreted. Not all jihadists are driven solely by a sense of political injustice; some hold the conviction that their jihad is designed to fight against Muslims who do not observe a pure form of Islam. Their desire does not always stem from a spiritual yearning and it is not necessarily based on a profound understanding of religion. Such narrow-

**“Jihadism’s very strength prevents it from functioning ‘in concert’ to concentrate, organize and monopolize violence to meet its objective of establishing an Islamic state or caliphate.”**

minded jihadists are unwittingly empowered by jihadist strategists who downplay the value of religious education lest it forestalls the Muslim youth’s enthusiasm for militancy. For instance, jihadist strategist Abu Mus`ab al-Suri believes that jihad should do away with the complications of a religious education. The only obligation is to “embrace Islam, then fight.”<sup>7</sup>

This ambivalent approach to structured religious education has inevitably made jihadism a magnet for many who embrace jihad even before learning how to pray. To these *nouveaux* Muslims, religious doctrine is an end in and of itself. For them, the emphasis is not so much on loyalty (*wala'*) to fellow Muslims; they are more preoccupied with those from whom they must dissociate (*bara'*). Some jihadists take this dissociation further, declaring those who do not

share their beliefs as unbelievers. This pronouncement is called *takfir* and, for some, carries the license to shed the blood of fellow Muslims. Given the idealistic and individualistic disposition of the jihadists, *takfir* is not limited to being declared against non-jihadists; it is a pronouncement that could be declared by jihadists against other jihadists. Thus, for the sake of protecting the purity of the faith, the doctrinally-driven jihadist fights the unbelievers—including fellow jihadists whom he perceives to have shirked their commitment to the faith—on two fronts: he does so in word, through declaring *takfir* against them; and in deed, through jihad.

*Takfir* is not about making friends and forging alliances; rather, the mindset of *takfir* translates into an obsessive preoccupation with identifying enemies and eliminating them. Thus, what *takfir* achieves by way of purifying the faith from any perceived signs of unbelief, it negates by preventing any sustained unity among the group. Even more seriously, since jihadism is premised on an individualist understanding of religion (until a true Islamic leadership emerges), *takfir* too can be decided by individual jihadists and thus lead to an anarchic use of jihad and violence to execute God’s Law as each religious zealot sees fit.

### Does Jihadism Have a Future?

What is lacking in the jihadists’ commitment to equality before God is a deeper conviction that they need, in Hannah Arendt’s words, to “act in concert.”<sup>8</sup> In Islamic parlance, they lack an appreciation of the importance of the unity of the *jama'a*, the “community,” the cornerstone of Sunni Islam. Instead, the jihadist believes that he has entered into an individual covenant with God: he fights to make His Law supreme on earth, and in return God reserves a place for him in paradise. The true test of the jihadist is his willingness when necessary to dissociate himself from his group and its members, and declare *takfir* against them if necessary. In so doing, he is armed with the conviction that while he loses his community, he gains the eternal life of his soul.

<sup>7</sup> Abu Mus`ab al-Suri, “The Global Islamic Resistance Call,” excerpts of which are translated in Brynjar Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad: the Life of al-Qaida Strategist Abu Mus`ab al-Suri* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), p. 428.

<sup>8</sup> Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (New York: A Harvest Book, 1970), p. 44.

The rejectionist mindset that some jihadists ultimately develop combines odd blends of idealism with sectarianism; commitment to equality with a lack of desire to be with equals; individualism with remarkable indifference even to death itself. The jihadists are trapped by their own idealistic goals; the more principled they are in their ideals, the more likely they will resort to *takfir*.

As a result, jihadism’s very strength prevents it from functioning “in concert” to concentrate, organize and monopolize violence to meet its objective of establishing an Islamic state or caliphate.<sup>9</sup> The consequences of this worldview are detrimental to achieving any form of sustainable unity within a group, let alone on a global scale. Potentially, the jihadist can direct his jihad against not just the “infidels,” the “apostate” rulers and their collaborators, but also against fellow jihadists. Thomas Hobbes’ apocalyptic narrative of life in a lawless state of nature as “nasty, brutish and short” may still be an optimistic description of what jihadism can lead to: parts of Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan now provide a living reality of the freewheeling of jihad and *takfir*.

Jihadist ideologues can applaud themselves for mobilizing Muslims across the globe to join the caravan of jihad, but they have ultimately failed to distinguish between jihad and power. More precisely, they have failed to distinguish between what Arendt observed as the “instrumental character” of violence on the one hand, and power, or “the human ability not just to act but to act in concert,” on the other hand.<sup>10</sup> Accordingly, the jihadists’ chances of securing eternal life in paradise are probably greater than their chances of establishing a caliphate in this world.

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<sup>9</sup> This is based on the definition in Max Weber, *The Vocation Lectures* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1994), p. 33.

<sup>10</sup> Arendt, pp. 44, 46.

## The Role of Lashkar-i-Islam in Pakistan's Khyber Agency

By Syed Manzar Abbas Zaidi

PAKISTAN'S KHYBER AGENCY remains a bastion of militant activity. Insurgents have frequently destroyed NATO supply convoys in Khyber, including an attack on four NATO oil tankers at the end of August.<sup>1</sup> Most recently, a remotely-detonated bomb killed three Pakistani security force personnel traveling through the agency on October 20.<sup>2</sup> The Torkham border crossing is located in Khyber, which is essential for supplying international troops in neighboring Afghanistan. Militant groups also use Khyber as a base from where they can launch attacks on Peshawar, the capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province (formerly known as the North-West Frontier Province).<sup>3</sup> This latter threat is especially concerning to Pakistani authorities and explains why they have carried out a number of recent strikes in Khyber, hoping to shut off or reduce the flow of militants into Peshawar. At the end of August, for example, Pakistani security forces launched a series of airstrikes in Khyber's Tirah Valley, killing at least 45 people.<sup>4</sup> According to Pakistani security officials, the strikes "were carried out after intelligence information [revealed] that militants were preparing to launch suicide attacks in Peshawar and other parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province (KP) during the next week."<sup>5</sup> Airstrikes continued through October, with Pakistani helicopter gunships targeting militant hideouts in the Bara area on October 9.<sup>6</sup>

This article profiles Khyber Agency, showing how it is suffering from a blend of sectarian violence and Talibanization. It also reveals how at least one militant group in Khyber, Lashkar-i-Islam (LI),

has morphed from a vigilante crime fighting organization into a terrorist group allied with Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

### Background

Khyber Agency is home to approximately 546,730 people, and it is divided into the administrative sub-units of Bara, Jamrud and Landi Kotal.<sup>7</sup> Khyber is geographically significant because it borders Peshawar, the capital of KP, as well as Nangarhar Province in Afghanistan. It is also a critical hub of the area's weapons trade. Khyber has been a hotbed of militancy ever since the Tirah Valley,<sup>8</sup> a desolate but strategic area, was reportedly utilized by al-Qa`ida militants to escape into Pakistan after the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001. The Tirah Valley has been the site of repeated Pakistani airstrikes in an effort to destroy terrorist cells planning suicide attacks in the settled areas of Pakistan, and the valley acts as a key territory used by anti-state militants.<sup>9</sup>

Militancy became entrenched in Khyber when local tribesman Haji Namdar founded the organization Amr bil Maroof wa Nahi Anil Munkar (Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, AMNAM) in the Tirah Valley. The group was based on the Afghan Taliban template,<sup>10</sup> and unsubstantiated rumors ascribe this to Ustad Yasir, a prominent Taliban commander who reportedly prompted Haji Namdar to establish AMNAM.<sup>11</sup> On the prompting of Yasir, Namdar established an FM radio station and employed a radical tribal preacher, Mufti Munir Shakir, to spread Islamist sermons.<sup>12</sup> Namdar could not compete with Shakir's firebrand oratory, and

many AMNAM cadres defected to Shakir, who would later create LI in 2004. The other significant group in the area was Ansar-ul-Islam (AI), led by an Afghan, Pir Saif ur Rehman, who had settled in the area. Even though both AMNAM and AI were militant, AI was initially less inclined toward violence because of its leader's Barelvi inclinations, which were more moderate than the brand of Deobandism preached by Shakir in AMNAM. Both AI and AMNAM, however, began a causal loop of "outbidding" the other by flexing their militant muscle through FM radio station broadcasts. On these networks, they would deride each other and issue sectarian *fatawa* ordering the other group to leave Khyber.<sup>13</sup>

These clashes developed into a serious conflict, which prompted the tribes to act against AI and AMNAM. Even though both Rehman and Shakir were exiled for a time in 2005, this proved even more deleterious to peace in the area by bringing to the fore more militant commanders.<sup>14</sup> LI was taken over by Mangal Bagh Afridi, and it continued to clash with AI.<sup>15</sup> Under Mangal Bagh's leadership, LI became the most significant and organized militant group operating in Khyber, while AMNAM and AI were largely marginalized.

### The Taliban Arrive in Khyber

Until 2008, Mangal Bagh tended to portray LI as merely a reformist organization fighting against criminals such as drug traffickers, gamblers, kidnappers and car thieves in the Bara area.<sup>16</sup> This paradigm shifted in 2008. In that year, the TTP began establishing its hold on the area, and the number of attacks on NATO supply convoys rose significantly. Due to Western pressure on the state, the Pakistani government banned AMNAM, LI and AI, and it launched military operations against

7 The population estimate is based on Pakistan's 1998 census.

8 The Tirah Valley is only accessible through the heartland of FATA. The terrain is rugged, there are pockets of militancy all along the way, and the area is desolate, which is why it has become a militant stronghold.

9 "Pakistan Air Raids Kill Scores."

10 For details, see Caroline Wadhams and Colin Cookman, "Faces of Pakistan's Militant Commanders," Center for American Progress, July 22, 2009.

11 Personal interview, Pakistani security official, Peshawar, Pakistan, May 2010. Also see Raheel Khan, "The Battle for Pakistan: Militancy and Conflict in Khyber," New America Foundation, April 2010.

12 Manzar Zaidi, "A Profile of Mangal Bagh," *The Long War Journal*, November 11, 2008.

13 Ibid. Ansar-ul-Islam is Barelvi in persuasion, whereas Shakir follows a strict Deobandi creed. The main bone of contention between the groups has been their different sectarian ideologies.

14 Zaidi.

15 Mangal Bagh started out in humble circumstances as a bus conductor driving the Peshawar-Bara route, and was initially a minor activist of the Awami National Party, the ruling secular political party in KP. He rose from a commander to the head of LI in just a few years.

16 Ibid.

these groups.<sup>17</sup> Since then, there have been four major operations by the state in the area, titled: Darghlu, Baya Darghlu, Sirat-e-Mustakeem, and Khwakh Ba De Shum.<sup>18</sup> Despite these operations, the state did not initially believe that LI had genuine linkages to the TTP, as the first three operations did not seriously target Mangal Bagh and his group.

Indeed, Bagh rebuffed several offers from the TTP to merge with his group before 2008.<sup>19</sup> He remained independent even during the major Sirat-e-Mustakeem government operation in June 2008, which directly targeted LI.<sup>20</sup> Although during this time LI fit into the paradigm of Talibanization by shutting down music shops and even abducting Christians from Peshawar, the group did not engage in widespread terrorist attacks against the state, and it did not conduct suicide operations.<sup>21</sup>

For the TTP, securing a positive relationship with a group in Khyber was important for its strategic objectives. Gaining operational movement in Khyber would allow it to effectively disrupt NATO supplies to Afghanistan, which transit through Torkham in the Khyber Pass. Yet the TTP had initial difficulty establishing its influence in the agency since three strong militant groups already existed in Khyber—AMNAM, AI and LI. They all resented the TTP's intrusion, clashing with them on occasion.

To gain influence in Khyber, the TTP reportedly sent reputed Afghan commander Ustad Yasir to the territory. It is not known when he arrived in the area, since evidence is anecdotal.<sup>22</sup> Initially, Haji Namdar of AMNAM had

cordial relations with Yasir because Namdar was seeking an alliance to strengthen his weakening militant position.<sup>23</sup> True to its creed, however, the TTP wanted total territorial domination, and they soon soured relations with all the militant entities in Khyber by conducting a suicide attack on a tribal *jirga* that killed more than 40 tribal chiefs, representative of all the major factions in the agency.<sup>24</sup> During the Sirat-e-Mustakeem operation, the TTP suspected Haji Namdar of siding with the Pakistani state against the TTP. For this alleged transgression, a TTP operative assassinated Namdar in August 2008.<sup>25</sup>

The military operations appeared to do the TTP's work for them, as the offensives were instrumental in pushing LI into the arms of the Taliban.<sup>26</sup> After the Sirat-e-Mustakeem operation, it appears that Bagh moved closer to the TTP in the latter half of 2008. Bagh publicly changed his stance, telling the government to drop its demand for his surrender, saying, "Now it is difficult for us to live in peace. The conflict will not be confined to Khyber Agency alone; rather it will spread to the entire Peshawar region."<sup>27</sup> Shortly after the statement, reports of LI-perpetrated terrorism began to appear.<sup>28</sup> A daring suicide attack on the U.S. Consulate in Peshawar in April 2010 is one of several high-profile cases linked to LI.<sup>29</sup> During that attack, militants arrived outside the consulate in two vehicles, one of which was detonated near an armored personnel carrier, while armed men exited the other and shot at the

consulate before blowing themselves up.<sup>30</sup> They had brought ramps to help scale the metal barriers of the consulate, and would have entered the compound if debris from the armored

## "LI in the Tirah Valley has emerged as a primary threat to Pakistan's urban centers."

personnel carrier had not jammed into the barrier.<sup>31</sup> Police investigations have tied the assailants to LI.<sup>32</sup> This incident is just one of many in a series of major LI attacks on Peshawar, all of which seemed to originate from the Tirah Valley.<sup>33</sup>

In the end, the TTP managed to secure its position in Khyber by improving relations with LI, the agency's largest faction.<sup>34</sup> Authoritative sources have cited the close symbiotic relationship between LI and the TTP, including reports that LI is using TTP suicide trainers such as Said Noor to train its fighters.<sup>35</sup> The TTP maintains its presence in Khyber through local commanders. These commanders reportedly consist of the TTP's second-tier leadership, who are controlled by more senior TTP commanders in neighboring Orakzai Agency. In Orakzai, TTP leaders coordinate the group's activities, while on-the-ground operatives tend to liaison mainly with LI, particularly regarding attacks on Peshawar.<sup>36</sup> This relationship also helps the TTP destroy NATO supply convoys passing through the area; more than 700 cargo trucks and military vehicles have been destroyed through 2010.<sup>37</sup>

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

25 "Pakistan Militant Leader Killed," BBC, August 13, 2008; Roggio, "Pakistani Troops Target Extremists in Khyber"; Personal interview, Khyber Agency-based journalist, July 2010.

26 The Taliban began appearing in Khyber in 2006, although then they were usually known as *magami* (local) Taliban since the TTP nomenclature had not yet become common currency. The Taliban would later coalesce as a TTP franchise controlled by commanders from neighboring Orakzai Agency.

27 Muhammad Amir Rana and Rohan Gunaratna, *Al-Qaeda Fights Back Inside Pakistani Tribal Areas* (Lahore: Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies, 2007), p. 43.

28 Personal interview, prominent Peshawar-based reporter, May 2010.

29 Personal interview, Pakistani security officials, Peshawar, Pakistan, August 2010.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid.

34 Bagh has made exaggerated claims to having 180,000 volunteers. More realistic estimates by authorities, however, put the figure around at least 10,000 fighters.

35 Personal interview, senior police officials, Peshawar, Pakistan, May 2010.

36 Zaidi.

37 Bill Roggio, "Suicide Bomber Kills 19 in Khyber," *The Long War Journal*, February 10, 2010.

Today, LI apparently pays recruits a monthly salary, and it offers free meals to convince fighters to join its ranks.<sup>38</sup> LI reportedly has a fleet of at least 138 vehicles.<sup>39</sup> The group raises funds by levying taxes on vehicles traveling through Khyber, or by smuggling goods. It also earns money through receiving protection funds from embattled minority groups in Khyber, such as the Sikhs. Nevertheless, Pakistani authorities argue that even these funding methods do not fully account for the group's affluence.<sup>40</sup> As for AI and AMNAM, they have been largely marginalized due to the symbiotic relationship between the TTP and LI.<sup>41</sup>

### Conclusion

Many analysts worry that the troop surge in Afghanistan has put pressure on Khyber to accommodate militants fleeing across the border. This concern is especially relevant considering that Pakistan's military is heavily engaged in Waziristan and may not be able to divert its attention to Khyber Agency until other military operations are concluded. The current offensive in Khyber, which is a carryover of the Khwakh Ba De Shum initiative, is limited in scope, with only 200 troops, augmented by aerial firepower, deployed in Landi Kotal.<sup>42</sup> This indicates that the Pakistan Army has not initiated full-scale COIN operations in Khyber comparable to those in Swat and Waziristan. As a result, Khyber may become a sanctuary for the hard-pressed TTP leadership, or as a conduit for Taliban fighters fleeing from allied forces in Afghanistan. In fact, the Torkham border crossing near Peshawar caters to a tremendous amount of population flow and transit trade to and from Afghanistan.

Simultaneously, LI in the Tirah Valley has emerged as a primary threat to Pakistan's urban centers. LI, which did not get its start as a terrorist group, has now become a terrorist organization allied with the TTP, a startling development for any observer of the evolution of militant groups in Pakistan. This is an exact replication of the process that occurred in Swat, when Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TNSM) militants joined the Taliban. LI resorted to terrorism after operations were initiated against it, notwithstanding the fact that it openly challenged the writ of the state in Khyber by coercing local officials, closing schools, conducting kidnapping for ransom, among other expressions of extremism.<sup>43</sup> The TTP was a logical ally because of their tactical linkages, and this relationship allowed LI to sideline competing organizations in the agency.

This case shows that whenever a dominant militant entity in the tribal areas is challenged by the state, it tends to rapidly evolve along trajectories of terrorism and insurgency, regardless of what its self-professed intentions once were.

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<sup>38</sup> Personal interviews, staff of the political agent in Khyber Agency, May 2010. These details were also corroborated by senior police officials in Peshawar, along with a prominent Peshawar-based journalist who requested anonymity.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Personal interviews, senior police and district administration officials, Peshawar, Pakistan, May 2010.

<sup>41</sup> Zaidi.

<sup>42</sup> Bill Roggio, "Fighting Intensifies in Northwestern Taliban Strongholds," *The Long War Journal*, November 27, 2009.

<sup>43</sup> Although government operations against LI appear to explain why the group moved closer to the TTP, the government had little choice. LI's influence was encroaching into Peshawar, and the group was defying the writ of the state and flaunting its vigilante power.

## The Torkham Border Closure and Attacks on NATO Supply Convoys in Pakistan

By Tayyab Ali Shah

ON SEPTEMBER 30, 2010, U.S. helicopter gunships left their base in Afghanistan and crossed into neighboring Pakistan.<sup>1</sup> Once in Pakistani territory, the helicopters killed two Pakistani frontier guards after mistaking them for Taliban insurgents. The deaths of the Pakistani soldiers came in the context of a drastic increase in U.S. unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) attacks on militant strongholds in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) during the month of September.<sup>2</sup> The UAV attacks are largely unpopular in Pakistan, and the government in Islamabad only acquiesces to them privately. Yet the direct attack on Pakistani soldiers by U.S. helicopters caused Islamabad to close the Torkham border crossing in FATA's Khyber Agency in apparent retaliation. The Torkham border crossing is critical for the international mission in Afghanistan because at least 25% of non-lethal NATO supplies arrive into Afghanistan through this post.<sup>3</sup>

In the subsequent 10-day blockade of Torkham, more than 150 NATO supply trucks were destroyed in Pakistan.<sup>4</sup> Although attacks on NATO supply

<sup>1</sup> Hussain Afzal and Deb Riechmann, "Pakistan Blocks War Supply Route to Afghanistan After NATO Allegedly Kills 3 Border Guards," Associated Press, September 30, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> In September, the CIA launched 21 attacks with UAVs, the most ever during a single month, and more than twice the number in a typical month. For details, see Abdul Sattar, "25 NATO Fuel Tankers Attacked in Pakistan," Associated Press, October 6, 2010; Karin Brulliard and Karen DeYoung, "NATO Fuel Tankers Are Torched in Pakistan," *Washington Post*, October 1, 2010; Mark Mazzetti and Eric Schmitt, "C.I.A. Steps Up Drone Attacks on Taliban in Pakistan," *New York Times*, September 27, 2010.

<sup>3</sup> Karin Brulliard, "Pakistan Ends Blockade, Reopens Border to NATO Supply Trucks," *Washington Post*, October 10, 2010. Other sources place this number higher. See Jane Perlez and Helene Cooper, "Signaling Tensions, Pakistan Shuts NATO Route," *New York Times*, September 30, 2010; "Nato Supply Lorry in Pakistan Hit by Blast," BBC, October 5, 2010.

<sup>4</sup> David Rising, "Pakistan Afghan Border Crossing Re-opens for NATO," Associated Press, October 10, 2010.

trucks in Pakistan are not unusual, this latest campaign of sabotage and assault marked the first time that NATO supplies were targeted in such quick succession and in all four provinces of the country.<sup>5</sup>

This article provides an overview of the importance of Pakistan as a NATO supply route, while also detailing the recent series of attacks and identifying the various parties that may be responsible.

#### **The Importance of Pakistan as a NATO Supply Route**

NATO supplies arrive on the South Asian continent through Pakistan's southern port of Karachi, and then travel through two border crossings into neighboring landlocked Afghanistan.<sup>6</sup> Fuel from Pakistani refineries is also transported into Afghanistan along these same routes. Although NATO has attempted to diversify its Afghanistan supply routes during the last two years, it remains heavily dependent on Pakistani territory.

Placing the importance of Pakistani supply routes in context, approximately 1,000 container lorries and tankers pass through Torkham on their way to Kabul daily, while another 150 lorries and tankers pass through the southern supply route of Chaman to Kandahar.<sup>7</sup> Approximately 150 NATO supply trucks were stranded at the Torkham border crossing one week after the post was closed, and an estimated 6,500 NATO supply vehicles were backed up across Pakistan along the 930-mile route from the port of Karachi to Torkham.<sup>8</sup> Although the Chaman border crossing remained open, the backed-up supply trucks could not be adequately diverted. The Chaman crossing is not as cost effective because the main U.S. bases in Afghanistan, such as Bagram, are located closer to the Torkham route. Moreover, the Chaman route is not as

safe due to the territory it crosses in Pakistan, as well as the territory it must pass through in Afghanistan.<sup>9</sup>

In recent years, alternate northern supply routes have been opened and expanded in the former Soviet states of Central Asia, yet these paths have served to complement, not replace, the Pakistani routes. These latter routes are by far the shortest, most direct and well established. It costs more than twice as much to move supplies through the northern routes, and hijackings and gun battles have become common on them.<sup>10</sup> The northern routes are also influenced by Russia and the former Soviet states, which adds geopolitical variables to the equation.

#### **The October Attacks**

The first of the series of recent attacks on NATO supply convoys occurred on October 1, one day after the Torkham border crossing was closed. Approximately 20 militants armed with rocket launchers and assault rifles torched and destroyed at least 27 NATO supply trucks at Shikarpur in interior Sindh Province.<sup>11</sup> On that same day, a vehicle that was transporting supplies for NATO forces from Karachi to Kandahar, via the Chaman route, was attacked near Baghbana Tehsil in Khuzdar, Baluchistan Province; the trailer was completely destroyed while the driver and his assistant were burned alive.<sup>12</sup>

On October 3, six people were killed and dozens injured after a group of seven to eight assailants on motorbikes sprayed bullets at 28 NATO oil tankers near the Defense Housing Authority Phase 2 in Islamabad, causing the tankers to catch fire.<sup>13</sup> The following day, armed

men attacked a NATO container truck traveling through a town in Wadh Tehsil of Khuzdar district, while two NATO oil tankers were destroyed in the Mangochar area of Kalat district in Baluchistan Province.<sup>14</sup> All three vehicles were carrying NATO supplies through the Chaman Pass.

On October 6, in one of the largest attacks, 77 NATO supply tankers parked near a hotel on Grand Trunk Road at Khairabad in Nowshera District were attacked by multiple assailants armed with explosives.<sup>15</sup> The militants first warned the drivers, their assistants and guests at the hotel to stay away from the oil tankers before they attacked the vehicles. Fifty-four tankers were completely destroyed, while the ensuing fire took 16 hours to bring under control.<sup>16</sup> The same day, armed men in two vehicles and on motorbikes attacked a NATO truck terminal at Akhtar Abad on the Western Bypass of Quetta where more than 30 oil tankers were parked.<sup>17</sup> One driver was killed, while 20 oil tankers were completely destroyed.<sup>18</sup> Finally, on October 9, approximately 30 armed men attacked NATO supply tankers in the Mithri area of Bolan district in Baluchistan Province.<sup>19</sup> Twenty-nine tankers were destroyed in the attack.<sup>20</sup>

#### **Who is Behind the Attacks?**

Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) claimed responsibility for the attacks, and it said that they were all carried out by its newly formed Siyara Group.<sup>21</sup>

14 "Three Nato Oil Tankers Set Ablaze in Khuzdar, Kalat," *The News International*, October 5, 2010.

15 "54 Nato Oil Tankers Gutted in Nowshera," *The News International*, October 8, 2010.

16 Ibid.

17 "57 Nato Tankers Set Ablaze in Fresh Assaults," *Daily Times*, October 7, 2010; "46 Nato Tankers Torched in Quetta, Nowshera," *The News International*, October 7, 2010.

18 Ibid.

19 "29 NATO Oil-Tankers Destroyed in Fresh Attack," *Deccan Herald*, October 9, 2010; "29 Tankers Torched in New Quetta Attack," *The News International*, October 10, 2010.

20 Ibid.

21 *Siyara* is an Urdu and Pashto word meaning mobility, as in a mobile assault group. It is not clear whether the TTP truly created this group, or if it is just propaganda. See "Militants Claim Torching Nato Oil-Tankers in Sindh," *The News International*, October 3, 2010; "Taliban Claim Attack on Oil Tankers," BBC Urdu, October

5 Although Islamabad is technically part of the Islamabad Capital Territory, it is within the territory of Punjab Province.

6 Brulliard, "Pakistan Ends Blockade, Reopens Border to NATO Supply Trucks."

7 "Nato Supply Lorry in Pakistan Hit by Blast."

8 Charles Recknagel, "How Secure is NATO's Supply Line in Pakistan?" RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty, October 8, 2010.

Some Pakistani and NATO officials said the same.<sup>22</sup> Pakistan's foreign office, however, associated the October attacks with public outrage emanating from NATO's incursion into Pakistani territory.<sup>23</sup> Despite the TTP's claims of responsibility, the identities of the assailants are not clear.

Reports suggest that other parties may have played a role in the recent string of attacks. For example, the most surprising attack was the incident at Shikarpur in interior Sindh Province. Shikarpur and neighboring areas of Sindh have not experienced this type

**“Pakistan’s sensitivity to NATO incursions and its reaction against it may lead to more border closures, more intense and frequent militant attacks on NATO convoys, and more tensions in U.S.-Pakistan bilateral relations.”**

of militant activity, suggesting an expansion of militancy to previously peaceful areas. Yet the Shikarpur area is also a stronghold of the ruling Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Sindhi nationalist parties, and Taliban operatives are not known to operate in the area.<sup>24</sup> Sindh civil society leaders rejected the claims of Pakistani officials that the Taliban were behind the destruction of the NATO vehicles in Sindh, saying that there was no support for the Taliban in the area.<sup>25</sup> Jeay Sindh Tehreek, a Sindhi nationalist group, organized a demonstration in favor of NATO supplies and against the attacks in different towns of Sindh, as reported in the Sindhi-language newspapers *Halchal* and *Sach*.

2, 2010.

22 “How Secure is NATO's Supply Line in Pakistan?”

23 “Torching Nato Supply Trucks was Expression of Public Anger,” BBC Urdu, October 2, 2010.

24 The PPP and Sindhi nationalist parties are considered anti-establishment.

25 This information is based on e-mail discussions with Karachi-based journalist and analyst Zia-ur-Rehman, in addition to another anonymous analyst.

Instead, local Sindhi politicians and media are calling the Shikarpur attack a conspiracy hatched by the Pakistani security establishment to make Sindh Province appear unstable. According to this logic, if instability enters Sindh Province, then the Pakistani military will have a justification to create garrisons or cantonments in the province—further increasing its control over Pakistani politics. One analyst, writing in the *Daily Times*, encapsulated this theory:

First, it [Pakistani security establishment] has ratcheted up the brinkmanship by stopping the NATO supply line and then allowing orchestrated attacks on the idling trucks. This is reminiscent of the November 1979 burning down of the U.S. Embassy, while General Ziaul Haq went on with his gingerly bicycle ride in Rawalpindi. The mobs torched the embassy and killed diplomats in the heart of Islamabad, while the security agencies stood by. The idea was to teach the Yanks a lesson so they would do business with the general on his terms.<sup>26</sup>

Another columnist added, “If Pakistan feels it is being nudged beyond the band of cooperation it has deemed acceptable, Pakistan will push back. Supply routes will be closed, attacks on convoys will mysteriously step up and cooperation in other areas will slow.”<sup>27</sup>

Yet another security analyst added that Pakistan's intelligence and security apparatus may be encouraging the attacks by “looking the other way” or may be themselves behind some of the operations. The security analyst added, “The fact that government ministers are calling the attack an expression of public anger shows that some may just be payback.”<sup>28</sup> Another columnist, who is himself a former Pakistan Army officer, wrote, “Militants’ torched NATO supplies in Shikarpur and (DHA Phase-II) Islamabad two nights apart?

26 Muhammad Taqi, “Smokescreen of Sovereignty,” *Daily Times*, October 7, 2010.

27 Cyril Almeida, “Strategic Stasis,” *Dawn*, October 8, 2010.

28 Riaz Sohail, “Nato Contractors ‘Attacking Own Vehicles’ in Pakistan,” BBC, October 6, 2010.

Tell me another [joke]. Who in heaven are we trying to fool?”<sup>29</sup>

This is not the first time that Pakistan's security establishment has been accused of supply convoy attacks. After the daring attacks near Islamabad in June 2010 that left dozens of NATO supply tankers destroyed, Ikram Sehgal, a Karachi-based defense and security analyst, said that there could be a nexus between the Taliban and some low-level intelligence officials because the militants seemed fully informed about the logistical importance and movement of that particular convoy.<sup>30</sup>

Additionally, several trucking companies have expressed suspicion that other truck contractors themselves are complicit in the attacks.<sup>31</sup> They claim that some trucking companies hired by NATO sell off the bulk of the oil in the tankers, and then destroy the tankers to conceal the theft. NATO then reportedly compensates the companies for the loss of their vehicles, or provides new equipment.<sup>32</sup>

Finally, there are allegations that the “trucking mafia” may be responsible for some of the attacks. The so-called trucking mafia has emerged around the protection of the supply convoys traveling through both Pakistan and Afghanistan, and it consists of security officials, insurgents, smugglers and tribal leaders. The drivers and their companies have to cut deals with Pakistani security officials (the police and the Khasadars), local contractors and tribes to allow the safe passage of their trucks.<sup>33</sup> The goods smuggled

29 Kamran Shafi, “An Inauspicious Beginning,” *Dawn*, October 5, 2010.

30 Aamir Latif, “NATO Convoys a Soft Target in Pakistan,” Global Post, June 18, 2010.

31 “Contractors Behind Attacks on NATO Supplies in Pakistan?” ANI, October 10, 2010; “Who is Behind Attacks on NATO Supplies in Pakistan?” Xinhua, October 9, 2010. Karachi-based Pakistani journalist and analyst Zia-ur-Rehman corroborated these claims, while another journalist, on condition of anonymity, dismissed it as propaganda popularized by the security establishment.

32 This is not a new allegation, as the *Daily Afghanistan* reported on December 14, 2008 that local contractors set fire to their trucks to collect insurance provided by foreign companies.

33 “Pakistan Roadblock Cuts Off Taliban Funds,” *Washington Post*, October 6, 2010.

and stolen from the convoys often end up in Sitara market on the outskirts of Peshawar.<sup>34</sup> They, too, could have played a role in the latest incidents.

### Conclusion

The recent border closure and almost daily attacks on NATO supply convoys may be the harbinger of developments to come. The spike in UAV attacks since September—and NATO's readiness to attack targets directly on the border or inside Pakistani territory—could be a sign that the United States wants to expand the conflict into Pakistan to place meaningful pressure on the Taliban and force a negotiated settlement to the conflict in Afghanistan. Yet Pakistan's sensitivity to NATO incursions and its reaction against it may lead to more border closures, more intense and frequent militant attacks on NATO convoys, and more tensions in U.S.-Pakistan bilateral relations. Clearly, many different groups have an interest in sabotaging NATO's supply convoys.

Neither the United States nor Pakistan can afford such developments. NATO has failed to diversify the bulk of its supply routes, and any prolonged blockade would hamper the war effort. Pakistan relies on U.S. financial assistance and the many jobs provided by the NATO supply convoys. Both countries need to prevent such disagreements from escalating into a more serious fracturing of the bilateral relationship.

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## Mitigating the Further Radicalization of India's Muslim Community

By Luv Puri

IN JANUARY 2010, U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates warned that a "syndicate" of terrorist groups, including Lashkar-i-Tayyiba (LT, or LeT), were "operating under the umbrella of al-Qaeda" to destabilize South Asia by provoking a war between India and Pakistan.<sup>1</sup> U.S. officials have warned that another 2008 Mumbai-style attack in India could cause a violent escalation of tensions between the two rival states, both of which possess nuclear weapons. Indeed, Indian authorities allege that Pakistan's intelligence agency helped organize recent terrorist strikes in India, including the assault on Mumbai.<sup>2</sup>

Smooth relations between India and Pakistan are essential for the success of the U.S. counterterrorism and counterinsurgency mission in South Asia. Any significant escalation of tensions between the two states would cause Pakistan to divert its forces away from its offensive against Taliban militants in the northwest and redeploy them to its eastern border with India. Therefore, building trust between India and Pakistan will be a key goal of President Barack Obama's upcoming visit to India in November 2010.

Although it is clear that Pakistan's India-focused terrorist infrastructure must be dismantled to prevent the further escalation of hostilities, there are steps that India can take domestically to help mitigate the growing threat of domestic terrorist attacks. In a number of recent attacks in India, for example, evidence revealed that homegrown Indian Muslim extremists have provided logistical support to Pakistan-based terrorist groups.<sup>3</sup> This article discusses

the three stages of radicalization among India's Muslim community, and suggests some steps the Indian government can take to prevent future violence. India's Muslim community is the third largest in the world, standing at approximately 160 million people.<sup>45</sup> It is critical that the Indian government does not underestimate the potential of further domestic discontent within this community, and India must take immediate action to increase communal harmony.

### Growing Radicalization of the Indian Muslim Community

#### First Stage

The radicalization of India's Muslim community has passed through three stages. The first stage can be traced to developments following the destruction of the Babri Mosque in 1992 by right-wing Hindu mobs.<sup>6</sup> The images of Hindu extremists destroying the mosque, and the subsequent riots targeting Muslims in Mumbai and New Delhi, shook the Muslim community. The wrangling over this disputed piece of land at Ayodhya led to religious polarization in various parts of India, and it provided an opportunity for extremist groups to exploit the insecurities of their respective communities. It was at this time that domestic terrorism involving Indian Muslims began.

One of the most deadly terrorist attacks during this first stage of radicalization struck India's financial capital of Mumbai in March 1993. A series of bombings killed 250 people.<sup>7</sup> The suspected organizers of the plot, Tiger Memon and Dawood Ibrahim, were Indian Muslims. The attacks occurred after violent Hindu-Muslim clashes broke out in the city. Right-wing Hindu organizations, such as Shiv

<sup>1</sup> India has approximately 1.1 billion people. For a comprehensive understanding of the political and social issues confronting Indian Muslims, see Balraj Puri, *Muslims of India Since Partition* (New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> "Mapping the Global Muslim Population: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Muslim Population," Pew Research Center, October 7, 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Some Hindu groups claim that the mosque was built by demolishing a Hindu temple in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>4</sup> A fuller account of the planning of the Mumbai blasts is detailed in S. Hussain Zaidi, *Black Friday: The True Story of the Bombay Bomb Blasts* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2003).

<sup>34</sup> "Looted Goods from Nato Trucks End Up in Peshawar Market," *Daily Times*, June 25, 2010.

Sena, contributed to the tensions, and the attacks were viewed as an act of revenge against the Hindu community for the riots and the demolition of the Babri Mosque.<sup>8</sup> Civil society groups intervened, which led to the restoration of calm in the city, but the violence brought a transformative change to Indian society. The discourse of groups such as the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), for example, became more extreme in the 1990s, partly as a result of these clashes.<sup>9</sup>

#### Second Stage

The second stage of extremism among India's Muslim community occurred after the communal violence in Gujarat in 2002. The Gujarat violence was sparked by the deaths of 59 train passengers, mostly Hindus, whose coach was set on fire by a Muslim mob in Godhra in February 2002. The attack sparked retaliatory massacres against Muslims in Gujarat, leaving more than 700 Muslims and 250 Hindus dead.<sup>10</sup> Around this time, loose extremist groups composed of Indian Muslims began to cooperate with LT operatives in Pakistan. Although LT had for years conducted a number of operations in Indian-administered Kashmir, it was only after 2002 that LT demonstrated a consistent capability to attack different regions of India.<sup>11</sup> Analysts believe that this change in strategy appears to be partly due to the support LT received from Muslim youth inside India.

One of LT's first attacks in which Indian Muslims were involved was in Mumbai in August 2003.<sup>12</sup> Terrorists posing as passengers left bombs in two taxi cabs, which then exploded in crowded areas.<sup>13</sup> Indian citizens Mohammed Hanif Sayeed, his wife Fahmida and Ashrat Ansari were convicted for the attack.<sup>14</sup> According to the prosecution, the three received their instructions from LT operatives in Dubai.<sup>15</sup>

Investigations into attacks since 2003 show other incidents where LT has collaborated with Indian Muslims for attacks inside India, such as the attack on the Indian Institute of Science in December 2005.<sup>16</sup> In that attack, two terrorists fired on a group of professors who were departing a conference, killing one of them.<sup>17</sup> Most of these attacks were claimed by India-based militant groups, yet later interrogations of the arrested indicated that they also had connections to extremist groups in Pakistan.

These loose extremist cells of Indian Muslims would eventually form the Indian Mujahidin, a network that has become an important asset for LT.<sup>18</sup> Groups such as the Indian Mujahidin have recruited Indian citizens from communally sensitive pockets of the country such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Gujarat, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra.<sup>19</sup> In 2008, the Mumbai police arrested 27 youths—including four IT-savvy members of the Indian Mujahidin—who sent e-mail messages in the name of the Indian Mujahidin after the July 2008 Ahmedabad blasts and before the September 2008 New Delhi blasts by hacking into wireless networks in Mumbai and Navi Mumbai.<sup>20</sup> Many

of them were trained in Pakistan.<sup>21</sup> Additionally, India's security establishment, after almost a year-long delay, finally admitted that there is a strong possibility that some Indian citizens provided help to the LT militants who carried out the terrorist strikes in Mumbai in November 2008.<sup>22</sup>

#### Third Stage

The latest stage of radicalization, however, has been of a different nature. Its chief characteristics are religious conservatism and intolerance, a development that has long-term societal ramifications for India.

In Kerala, the state enjoying the highest literacy rates in India, activists of the Popular Front of India (PFI) allegedly amputated the right hand of a college teacher on July 4, 2010.<sup>23</sup> The forced amputation occurred after the teacher allegedly insulted the Prophet Muhammad. PFI was established in 2006, and it is composed of several organizations, most of them extremist, who share the goal of mobilizing the Muslim community in India and enhancing the bloc's political power. PFI claims it promotes communal amity and social harmony, and it has a network in six Indian states.<sup>24</sup> The group, however, has espoused an extremist ideology. In its first political conference in 2009, for example, the PFI reportedly said,

The war on terror is a US agenda. It is a political tactic shaped by hegemonic forces bent upon world domination. The Muslims are the victims of the war on terror. The Indian government supports the War on Terror (WOT) and makes available the country's machinery for implementing the plan hatched by the US-Israel axis. It's in the wake of this alliance that we witness the increase in bomb blasts in the country.<sup>25</sup>

8 "The Shiv Sena Indicted," *Frontline*, August 15-28, 1998. The ascendancy of aggressive Hindu nationalism in the early 1990s and fierce anti-Muslim rhetoric contributed to the radicalization process of Muslim youth.

9 SIMI is said to be the fountainhead of the Indian Mujahidin. In the 1980s, SIMI's thrust was on education. In the 1990s, it centered around three issues: the call for jihad; the declaration of India as *dar al-harb* (an area of war); and the establishment of the caliphate. See Irfan Ahmad, *Islamism and Democracy in India: The Transformation of Jamaat-e-Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

10 "Post-Godhra Toll: 254 Hindus, 790 Muslims," Press Trust of India, May 11, 2005.

11 The LT did execute some attacks outside of Indian-administered Kashmir before 2002. It attacked the Red Fort in India's capital in 2000. There was also a terrorist strike on the Indian Parliament in December 2001, but this attack was carried out by Jaysh-i-Muhammad and the logistical support was provided by youths from the contested region of Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir.

12 "2003 Mumbai Blasts: Court Awards Death Penalty to 3 Convicts," *Indian Express*, August 6, 2009.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.; "Mumbai Twin Blasts: Three Sentenced to Death," Press Trust of India, August 6, 2009.

16 "We Were All Set to Hit Bangalore Again Last Year: Lashkar Operative to Police," *Indian Express*, January 12, 2009.

17 Ibid.

18 It is not exactly clear when the Indian Mujahidin was founded.

19 "Indian Mujahidin Strikes Deep," *Indian Express*, February 22, 2010.

20 "27 Indian Mujahideen Members Charged with Serial Bombings," IANS, February 17, 2009.

21 "Mumbai Arrests Expose New Face of Terror: Educated, Professionals," *Indian Express*, October 7, 2008.

22 "Indian Guided 26/11 Attackers: PC," Press Trust of India, February 5, 2010.

23 "Controversial Question Paper: Lecturer's Hand Chopped Off," *Indian Express*, July 5, 2010.

24 To see PFI's "constitution," visit [www.popularfront-india.com/pp/page/constitution](http://www.popularfront-india.com/pp/page/constitution).

25 "Here Come the Pious," *Tebelka Magazine* 7:40 (2010).

The political discourse of groups such as PFI has already led to heightened bouts of religious anxiety among Muslim youth, driving them to target people in their own community. Rayana Khasi, a 23-year-old Muslim woman and aeronautical engineer living in North Kerala, for example, received death threats for not wearing the veil.<sup>26</sup> For Kerala in particular, the exposure to West Asia's religious traditions is another factor contributing to heightened religiosity among the area's Muslim population. Kerala has experienced one of the highest rates of economic migration to Gulf countries in South Asia and many of the returnees are bringing home with them a conservative version of Islam that is in contrast to Islamic practices in South Asia.

Exacerbating this cycle of religious polarization is the resurgence of Hindu extremist groups in the region. The spate of blasts executed by groups such as the Indian Mujahidin resulted in the formation of Hindu militant groups seeking revenge against Muslims. Investigations are still unraveling about the extent of this development. Yet recent investigations found that some attacks in India were planned by Hindu extremist outfits such as Abhinav Bharat. In October 2007, for example, Hindu extremists allegedly detonated a bomb at the Ajmer Sharif shrine, a popular South Asian mausoleum of a 13<sup>th</sup> century Muslim saint.<sup>27</sup> In September 2008, Abhinav Bharat also allegedly bombed Muslim-inhabited areas of Malegaon and Modasa in the Indian states of Maharashtra and Gujarat, killing six civilians.<sup>28</sup> It was discovered that a retired Indian army colonel was allegedly involved in this latter attack.<sup>29</sup> Analysts are concerned that this cycle of violence could quickly escalate if authorities do not take action.

### Conclusion

Failure to reduce religious violence will increase tensions between India and Pakistan, bringing the two nuclear states closer to war and serving the interests of al-Qa`ida and the Taliban. To prevent the further radicalization of the Indian Muslim community, authorities must integrate the youth into the political, economic and social mainstream by addressing real or perceived grievances. India's mainstream political parties should take adequate steps for the economic and political empowerment of Indian Muslims.<sup>30</sup> At the same time, India's Muslim leaders must proactively prevent further radicalization of their youth.

Indian authorities should also strongly enforce the rule of law, including arresting Hindu fundamentalists who commit crimes against minorities in India. India suffers from an absence of an independent investigative institutional structure at the provincial level, which often results in weak legal cases and failed prosecutions. Effective policing by Indian authorities is an important step to a sound counterterrorism strategy.

India has one of the largest Muslim communities in the world, and its efforts to integrate this community successfully into the political, social and economic life of Indian society will be a lesson to the rest of the world, especially those countries navigating their own mixed religious populations.

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<sup>26</sup> Sovi Vidyadharan, "Young Woman Takes on Kerala's Taliban," NDTV, August 28, 2010.

<sup>27</sup> Mohammed Iqbal, "Ajmer Blast Case: RSS Leader's Name Figures in Charge Sheet," *Hindu*, October 23, 2010.

<sup>28</sup> Christophe Jaffrelot, "Abhinav Bharat, the Malegaon Blast and Hindu Nationalism," *Economic & Political Weekly* 45:43 (2010).

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> During the 2008 parliamentary elections, for example, the representation of Indian Muslims declined to 5.1% from 6.2%, whereas the Indian Muslim community composes approximately 13% of India's population. See Balraj Puri, "Look Beyond," *Indian Express*, June 23, 2009.

### From Iraq to Yemen: Al-Qa`ida's Shifting Strategies

By Ryan Evans

IN THE WAKE of al-Qa`ida in Iraq's (AQI) strategic failure following the "awakening" movement and the U.S. military's "surge" strategy, a new generation of al-Qa`ida has emerged in Yemen under the banner of al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). AQAP has pursued a dramatically different strategy from AQI, offering a small but interesting case study in the differences among al-Qa`ida's regional affiliates.<sup>1</sup> It also raises the question over whether AQAP analyzed the lessons from the strategic failure in the Iraq conflict and adjusted its regional strategy accordingly.<sup>2</sup> AQAP in Yemen, for example, is largely indigenous to the Arabian Peninsula and has focused, with uneven success, on mobilizing portions of Yemen's tribal society through the adoption of grievances and even the provision of social services in the post-2006 period.<sup>3</sup> This is a stark contrast to AQI's strategy under Abu Mus`ab al-Zarqawi.

This article contrasts AQI's failed strategy in Iraq with AQAP's different approach in Yemen. It also suggests that al-Qa`ida's senior leadership may have learned from its failures in Iraq when developing its strategy for the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>4</sup>

1 For this article, "affiliate" denotes any Salafi-jihadist terrorist group that has explicitly allied itself with al-Qa`ida (such as al-Qa`ida in Iraq or al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula), while not necessarily adopting the name "al-Qa`ida" (such as al-Shabab and Jemaah Islamiya).

2 This argument stands apart from other analysts who view AQAP's strategy more as a result of lessons learned from defeats in Saudi Arabia. See, for example, Alistair Harris' excellent "Exploiting Grievances: Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula," Christopher Boucek ed., *Yemen on the Brink* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2010).

3 According to one study, Yemenis make up a majority of the organization and Saudis more than a third. See Mu`rad Batal al-Shishani, "An Assessment of the Anatomy of al-Qaeda in Yemen: Ideological and Social Factors," *Terrorism Monitor* 8:9 (2010). There is a great deal of cultural overlap between Saudi Arabia and Yemen in a number of ways, and as such the Saudis cannot be considered "foreign" in Yemen as citizens of other Arab, and even other Gulf Arab, countries might be.

4 Other variables may better explain AQAP's strategy

### Al-Qa`ida in Iraq

AQI's strategy in Iraq was originally expressed in a letter from Abu Mus`ab al-Zarqawi to Usama bin Ladin.<sup>5</sup> It revolved around provoking the Shi`a of Iraq through spectacular acts of violence intended to goad the nascent and Shi`a-dominated Iraqi government into repression and slaughter against Iraqi Sunnis, who would be awakened and mobilized to wage jihad. This mobilization would draw in widespread Sunni support from other Muslim countries before the Shi`a could solidify their power in Iraq. As emphasized by al-Zarqawi, "Our fighting against the Shi`a is the way to drag the [Islamic] nation into the battle."<sup>6</sup> The larger goal was to drive out the "crusaders" and to establish a "stem-land" for the Sunni caliphate that would serve as a base to overthrow Arab governments and to eventually liberate Palestine.<sup>7</sup>

Al-Zarqawi made it clear that he did not hold the Sunnis and the *ulama* (clerics) of Iraq in high esteem. He dismissed the Iraqi mujahidin as inexperienced and expressed contempt for those unwilling to be "martyrs."<sup>8</sup> These sentiments were reflected in a strategy that did not seek to engage the Sunnis in any substantive political mobilization beyond demonstrative attacks against coalition forces and the Iraqi state and

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on the peninsula, including the organic social dynamics of Yemeni society, but these are not considered in this article.

5 This article focuses on AQI's strategic thought during the al-Zarqawi period—particularly as it is related to the Sunni population of Iraq—and the reasons for its failure to achieve its strategic objectives. AQI was only one, albeit the most infamous and prominent, of a myriad of groups that engaged in armed struggle against the U.S.-led coalition and the Iraqi government. Most insurgent groups in Iraq were not Islamist in their orientation. Indeed, the insurgency was "kicked off" by disaffected former members of the military and political elite of Ba`athist Iraq. The Ba`athists planned to use "fidayin" as a means of providing strategic depth in the event of an invasion. For details on al-Zarqawi's letter to Bin Ladin, see "February 2004 Coalition Provisional Authority English translation of terrorist Musab al Zarqawi letter obtained by United States Government in Iraq," U.S. Department of State, undated. The letter was intercepted in January 2004, before al-Zarqawi's group officially joined al-Qa`ida. This letter will hereafter be cited as "Zarqawi-Bin Ladin Letter."

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

provoking repression.<sup>9</sup> Although AQI was allied with the Sunni tribes, it did not seek to make their interests an organic part of the group beyond driving out the invaders and killing the Shi`a. Maintaining the good will and support of the tribes was not a chief concern.<sup>10</sup>

Al-Zarqawi's lack of trust and respect for Iraqi Sunnis was reflected in the non-Iraqi Arab dominance within AQI. For the first couple of years of the war, AQI was primarily a foreign organization with only 10% of its ranks filled by Iraqis.<sup>11</sup> By 2007, this had changed, with Iraqis composing 90% of the group.<sup>12</sup> AQI's heavily foreign character was not limited to its leadership. In Mohammed Hafez's 2007 study of suicide bombing in Iraq, only seven out of 102 bombers were Iraqi. The rest were from Arab countries and Muslim communities in Europe.<sup>13</sup> While AQI's cadres always represented a small proportion of Iraq's insurgents, their impact on the conflict was unmatched, largely because of their prolific suicide attacks—being responsible for far more than any other group—and higher levels of experience.<sup>14</sup>

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9 Ibid.

10 AQI's efforts were largely limited to propaganda, and they did not extend to creating meaningful partnerships with tribal shaykhs based on shared interests.

11 Mohammed M. Hafez, *Suicide Bombers in Iraq: The Strategy and Ideology of Martyrdom* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 2007).

12 To this day, leadership positions have remained predominantly non-Iraqi. See Bruce Hoffman, "The 'Cult of the Insurgent': Its Tactical and Strategic Implications," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 61:3 (2007); Andrew Phillips, "How Al Qaeda Lost Iraq," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 63:1 (2009); David Kilcullen, "Anatomy of a Tribal Revolt," *Small Wars Journal*, August 29, 2007; Bill Roggio, "Al Qaeda Appoints New 'War Minister' for Iraq," *The Long War Journal*, May 14, 2010; Bill Roggio, "Iraqi Forces Arrest Leader of Ansar al Islam," *The Long War Journal*, May 4, 2010.

13 Ibid.

14 Hafez noted that suicide attacks were "a major precipitating factor in the Shia-Sunni sectarian spiral of violence." According to Hafez's study, AQI was responsible for far more suicide attacks than any other insurgent group. The highest proportion, from 2003 to 2006, targeted Iraqi Security Forces (44%). Nearly a quarter of them targeted civilians and 15% targeted coalition forces. The remaining attacks were against the government and political parties, international entities, and tourists. See Hafez, *Suicide Bombers in Iraq: The Strategy and Ideology of Martyrdom*.

AQI's strategy as it pertained to the population was at the heart of the group's defeat.<sup>15</sup> AQI's heavy-handed attempts to marry into prominent Anbari tribal families to solidify its Iraqi base contravened local norms against women marrying men from outside the tribal confederation.<sup>16</sup> This led to a cycle of violence, which began when AQI killed a tribal leader who resisted marrying his daughter to an AQI member. This "created a revenge obligation (*tha'r*)" on his fellow tribesmen and they struck back. David Kilcullen recounted:

The terrorists retaliated with immense brutality, killing the children of a prominent sheikh in a particularly gruesome manner, witnesses told us [U.S. forces]. This was the last straw, they said, and the tribes rose up. Neighboring clans joined the fight, which escalated as AQI...tried to crush the revolt through more atrocities. Soon the uprising took off, spreading along kinship lines through Anbar and into neighboring provinces.<sup>17</sup>

AQI had also begun to take over, disrupt, or shut down smuggling and construction businesses that the Anbar tribes—particularly the Dulaimi tribe—had dominated since 1991. While this was an effective way for AQI to expand its financing, this tactical benefit came at a larger strategic cost by aggravating and alienating local tribal allies.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, the puritanical Salafist social and legal system that AQI sought to implement alienated local Sunnis. The "awakening" movement that followed in Anbar Province heralded a change—violent frustration with the group's perceived barbarity and contempt for Iraqi Sunni norms and social structures. To Mao, the guerrilla is the fish that swims in the sea of the population, depending on the sustenance it provides. The sea in Anbar had dried up. While AQI fights on to this day, the group is a shadow of what it once was.<sup>19</sup>

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15 Kilcullen; Phillips.

16 Phillips.

17 Kilcullen.

18 Phillips; Mohammed M. Hafez, "Al-Qa`ida Losing Ground in Iraq," *CTC Sentinel* 1:1 (2007).

19 Linda Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2008).

### Al-Qa`ida Adapting?

It is clear that AQAP's structure and strategy in Yemen is the result of the lessons learned from al-Qa`ida's operations and defeats in Saudi Arabia.<sup>20</sup> Yet the effects of lessons learned from the Iraqi theater have not been seriously considered. Yemeni jihadists composed the fourth largest contingent of foreign fighters in Iraq recorded in the Sinjar Records, making up 8.1% of the sample.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, there were a plethora of strategic critiques and commentary pieces on AQI strategy during the al-Zarqawi period from across the jihadist movement that reveal the internal debates of a learning process. While al-Qa`ida is a diffuse movement, its core leadership still exerts some control over strategy and specific attacks.<sup>22</sup> AQAP has a close relationship with al-Qa`ida's core leadership as its leader, Nasir al-Wahayshi, was at one time Usama bin Ladin's secretary.<sup>23</sup>

Two letters from al-Qa`ida's leadership in the tribal regions of Pakistan to al-Zarqawi reveal the strategic debate and learning at the highest levels of the movement as AQI's campaign dragged on. The letters, from Ayman al-Zawahiri and Atiyah Abd al-Rahman,<sup>24</sup> represent

20 See, for example, Harris.

21 Some 46% of these Yemenis were designated as suicide bombers and the rest as fighters. A CSIS study placed the percentage of Yemenis higher at 17%. For details, see Joseph Felter and Brian Fishman, *Al-Qaida's Foreign Fighters in Iraq: A First Look at the Sinjar Records* (West Point, NY: Combating Terrorism Center, 2008); Anthony Cordesman and Nawaf Obaid, "Saudi Militants in Iraq: Assessment and Kingdom's Response," Center for Strategic and International Studies, September 19, 2005.

22 Bruce Hoffman and Fernando Reinares eds., *Leadered Jihad* (New York: Columbia University Press, forthcoming).

23 For more evidence of ongoing close ties between al-Qa`ida central and AQAP, see Michael Isikoff and Mark Hosenball, "Exclusive: A U.S. Intelligence Breakthrough in the Persian Gulf?" *Newsweek*, February 14, 2010. Aside from the formal communication between al-Qa`ida central and AQAP as reported in *Newsweek*, there is more evidence of ties between the hub and the affiliate that speak to al-Qa`ida central's ability to influence AQAP's behavior. Also, al-Zawahiri has heaped praise on AQAP in propaganda releases in the last couple of years and described al-Wahayshi as the *amir* of the group. See "Al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula," Australian Government, available at [www.ag.gov.au](http://www.ag.gov.au).

24 Al-Rahman is a senior al-Qa`ida operative and member of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) who joined with Bin Laden in the 1980s.

al-Qa`ida central's objections to al-Zarqawi's strategy. Both critiques fall across the same themes, calling on him to focus more on popular support, avoid killing so many Shi`a, and to be more inclusive and less ideologically rigid.<sup>25</sup>

If driving the United States from Iraq to establish the emirate is the goal, al-Zawahiri explained, then "the strongest weapon which the mujahidin enjoy... is popular support from the Muslim masses in Iraq and the surrounding Muslim countries."<sup>26</sup> Al-Zawahiri called this the "popular war of jihad." Without this popular support, al-Zawahiri explained,

the Islamic mujahidin would be crushed in the shadows, far from the masses who are distracted or fearful, and the struggle between the jihadist elite and the arrogant authorities would be confined to prison dungeons far from the public and the light of day.<sup>27</sup>

Atiyah seemed to draw on Clausewitzian and Maoist principles: "Policy must be dominant over militarism." Atiyah found al-Zarqawi deficient in "embracing the people and bringing them together and winning them over and placating them." This, he insisted, "is the foundation while military operations must be a servant that is complementary to it."<sup>28</sup>

Al-Zawahiri and Atiyah both called for al-Zarqawi to be more willing to work with those who may hold religiously unorthodox positions, including "many of the religious scholars and tribal leaders and so forth." Al-Zawahiri chided al-Zarqawi for focusing so many attacks against the Shi`a, arguing that most Muslims do not understand the reasoning behind such attacks. He similarly took al-Zarqawi to task for the "scenes of slaughter." Al-Zawahiri wrote in the letter that "the general opinion of our support does not comprehend that." Al-Zawahiri then moved to the issue of the role of media in modern

25 "Letter Exposes New Leader in Al-Qa`ida High Command," translated by the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, September 25, 2006; "Letter from Ayman al-Zawahiri to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi," published by the Federation of American Scientists, undated.

26 Ibid.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid.

warfare in an oft-cited passage: "We are in a media battle in a race for the hearts and minds of our *umma*."<sup>29</sup> Toward the end of the letter, al-Zawahiri boldly asked if "the assumption of leadership for the mujahidin or a group of the mujahidin by non-Iraqis" might be a sensitive issue for some.<sup>30</sup> These critiques of al-Zarqawi's strategy were widely discussed within the movement and represent a key example of al-Qa`ida's learning processes and internal deliberations. Judging by how al-Qa`ida's affiliates have since shied away from al-Zarqawi's model, these deliberations seem to have had an effect. This seems particularly true in Yemen.

### Enter AQAP

Al-Qa`ida has been active in Yemen since the early 1990s, but its re-branding in 2009 under the name of al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula marked the emergence of a new generation of al-Qa`ida leadership on the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>31</sup> The re-branding of al-Qa`ida in Yemen also heralded a new strategy that differed markedly from AQI's. A few months prior to al-Zarqawi's death in Iraq, Nasir al-Wahayshi and 22 other Yemeni jihadists made their "great escape" from a prison in Sana`a in February 2006.<sup>32</sup> The strategy that has been revealed after this generational split differs dramatically from that of AQI's.<sup>33</sup> Today, AQAP seeks to co-opt existing social and political structures and genuinely adopt the grievances and interests of Yemenis, particularly those in the tribal regions of the country. Rather than large and spectacular attacks that kill scores of people, the group prefers "a policy of constant offense consisting of small, continual attacks."<sup>34</sup> Its targets do not include Yemeni civilians, but rather foreigners, oil infrastructure, and the security forces.<sup>35</sup> Yet these

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid.

31 Gregory D. Johnsen, "Al Qaeda's Generational Split," *Boston Globe*, November 9, 2007.

32 Barak Barfi, "Yemen on the Brink? The Resurgence of al Qaeda in Yemen," New America Foundation, January 25, 2010.

33 Al-Qa`ida in Yemen fundamentally changed in organization and strategy after the 2006 "great escape."

34 Gregory D. Johnsen, "Al-Qa`ida in Yemen's 2008 Campaign," *CTC Sentinel* 1:5 (2008).

35 Christopher Boucek, "The Evolving Terrorist Threat in Yemen," *CTC Sentinel* 3:9 (2010).

attacks are, at this stage, secondary to the relationship that AQAP has built with portions of some of Yemen's tribes in the governorates of Marib, Shabwa, and Abyan, and other constituencies in Yemen.<sup>36</sup>

Although al-Qa`ida operatives in Yemen have not historically had a strong relationship with the tribes, AQAP today spends a great deal of time and energy managing its tribal relationships.<sup>37</sup> While these relationships may not always be successful, it is significant to note that gaining and maintaining the good will of the tribes is a primary concern. The tribes are AQAP's "chief constituents," according to one analyst.<sup>38</sup> Its propaganda magazine, *Sada al-Malahim*, is used "as a vehicle for dialogue with the tribes."<sup>39</sup> Its articles "highlight the martial virtues of their sons and the contributions they have made to the jihadi effort. Others warn of plots the regime is hatching to occupy their regions to strip them of their cherished autonomy."<sup>40</sup>

Abd al-Ilah Haydar, a journalist, spoke of his experience contacting AQAP in the tribal regions of the country:

If you now go to Abyan for example you can meet Al-Qaeda elements because they are present in that area, especially Marib, Shabwah, and Al-Jawf. They are obvious to the people and the people know they are Al-Qaeda Organization elements.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Including those in non-tribal areas of Yemen such as Hadramawt and Hudayda. See Barfi. Yemeni tribes are not monolithic. The tribes have fragmented power structures and competing centers of power. As a result, outside groups are often appealed to or exploited—not just for advantage against the state or other tribes, but for advantage against competitors within the same tribe. It is also important to remember that not all tribes, or even a portion of all tribes, in Yemen are supportive of al-Qa`ida.

<sup>37</sup> Whether this effort is successful is beyond the remit of this article. For more details, see Gregory D. Johnsen, "The Expansion Strategy of Al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula," *CTC Sentinel* 2:9 (2009).

<sup>38</sup> Barfi.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Abdulsattar Hatithah, "Yemen: A Talk with Al-Qaeda Expert Abdul-Ilah Haydar," *Ashraq al-Awsat*, March 9, 2010.

The easy relationship that AQAP cadres seem to have with the people of these areas is the result of the group's more Maoist view of the population in the conflict.<sup>42</sup> The poor governance provided by the corrupt and repressive Ali Abdullah Salih regime makes AQAP's efforts to maintain this harmony easier. As a result, AQAP is taking the regime to task by organically adopting a multitude of local grievances related to governance in its propaganda.<sup>43</sup>

The Yemeni tribes that do provide some sort of support for AQAP—whether recruits, resources, or protection—have different motivations, including displeasure with the Salih regime. Their reasons are "predicated on political rather than ideological considerations."<sup>44</sup> To the tribes, al-Qa`ida "is just the latest in a long line of groups antagonistic to the government in Sanaa that have received tribal backing."<sup>45</sup>

Just as some tribes seek to exploit their relationship with AQAP, the terrorist group hopes to provoke government attacks in the tribal areas. One scholar explained that the group's relationship with some tribes "means that any fight that is designed to be a two-sided affair between the government and al-Qa`ida will not remain that way."<sup>46</sup> A writer in *Sada al-Malahim*, in the wake of joint Yemeni-American operations against AQAP in Yemen, demonstrated AQAP's efforts to appeal to the tribes:

Our disabled nation does not wake up except when it is shocked. Thus, this shock, which has led to the death of tens of Muslim children, women, and elders from the faithful tribes, will be enough to create Abyanistan, Arhabistan, Shabwistan [referring to Shabwa in Yemen], Maribstan

<sup>42</sup> Bard O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism* (Dulles, VA: Brassey's, 1990). During his war against the Kuomintang and the Japanese military occupation, Mao's men were ordered to live in harmony with the populace, be respectful, and pay for goods and services. Only through this harmony could Mao be successful, for the people were the cornerstone of Mao's program.

<sup>43</sup> Barfi.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Johnsen, "The Expansion Strategy of Al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula."

[referring to Marib], and eventually Yemenistan.

He warned the United States that the fight is with the tribes of the Arabian Peninsula rather than just al-Qa`ida.

While AQAP has non-Yemeni and non-Saudi cadres, they are not in leadership positions or even in positions of prominence.<sup>47</sup> According to one analyst, Yemenis make up 56% of AQAP and Saudis comprise 37% of the group.<sup>48</sup> Only 7% of the group's members are not from either country.<sup>49</sup> The same study found that AQAP's "area of influence"

starts from Abyan in the west and extends to al-Jawf in the south, passing through large areas of Shabwa governorate as far as Hadramut. From the north, it is connected to the capital city of San'a by Arhab directorate, overlooking the Maqfar triangle that connects it to another three provinces: San'a, Ghamran and Sa'da. The result is the formation of an area known for its tribal affiliations rather than its affiliation to the state and an area where there are few state institutions and where tribal laws dominate.<sup>50</sup>

Most AQAP recruits are from the tribal areas where the group operates, and local tribesmen are in positions of leadership within the organization. Some tribes have allied themselves with AQAP through marriage ties.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>47</sup> It may be that AQAP's indigenous leadership is merely the result of how the organization evolved out of Yemeni society, rather than a conscious decision by al-Qa`ida as a correction of mistakes made in Iraq. This demands further study.

<sup>48</sup> This analysis is based on a sample of 75 individuals "associated" with AQAP, but it is unclear if the analyst used convenience sampling or chose a more rigorous sampling method. For details, see Al-Shishani.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. Also see Laura Kasinof, "Local War in Southern Yemen Pits Government Against Militants," *Christian Science Monitor*, October 18, 2010; "Security Beefed Up in Oil Sector Fearing Qaeda Retaliation," *al-Arabiya*, March 17, 2010; "Abyan Gov Says He Can't Fight AQAP," APS Diplomat News Service, January 18, 2010.

<sup>51</sup> Barfi.

AQAP is becoming more aggressive as time goes on, but is taking care to advance its military campaign only as it perceives that it mobilizes support in Yemen. The Christmas Day plot on an airliner bound for Detroit at the end of 2009 announced that the organization was advancing to a new phase: high-profile attacks abroad. AQAP has been explicit about this shift, stating in *Sada al-Malahim* in February 2010, "We bring to our nation the good news that the mujahidin passed the stage of defense and repulsion of the aggression to the stage where they can take initiatives and attack."<sup>52</sup> Beyond Yemen, AQAP seeks to "chase the polytheists out of the Arabian Peninsula" and form an army that will establish emirates throughout the Muslim world until the caliphate is reborn.<sup>53</sup> The most recent terrorist plot involving bombs shipped out of Yemen and addressed to synagogues in Chicago is further evidence of this changing strategy and target-set.

### Conclusion

When the strategies of AQI and AQAP are juxtaposed, it is almost surprising that both are affiliates of the same transnational insurgent organization. Gregory Johnsen suggested that al-Qa`ida in Yemen "is the most representative organization in the country. [It] transcends class, tribe, and regional identity in a way that no other Yemeni group or political party

can match."<sup>54</sup> This could not be said about AQI or, arguably, any other al-Qa`ida affiliate in the history of the movement. As noted, AQI was an organization led primarily by non-Iraqi Arabs disinterested in political mobilization along Maoist lines, preferring spectacular and vicious acts of violence against coalition forces and Iraqis—particularly the Shi'a.

In contrast, AQAP seeks to co-opt existing social and political structures and genuinely adopt the grievances and interests of Yemenis, particularly (but not only) those in the tribal regions of the country. Its attacks are smaller and less spectacular than those of AQI, and the group does not target Yemeni civilians. To be clear, there are prominent influences behind AQAP's strategy other than lessons learned from the Iraqi theater, but the extent to which al-Qa`ida and the Islamist movement as a whole analyzes its failures and seeks to correct them cannot be ignored as a possible factor in AQAP's development.

It remains to be seen whether or not this shift in regional strategy heralds a larger turn for al-Qa`ida globally toward a more Maoist attitude. Furthermore, the differences between Iraq and Yemen as well as the different purposes each theater serves for al-Qa`ida limit the findings of this analysis.<sup>55</sup> Only broader and more sophisticated studies of strategic deliberations within al-Qa`ida and their results, as well as the passage of time, will reveal the answer.

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<sup>52</sup> There are limited strategic parallels here with the stages of Mao's popular protracted warfare model. The first stage is known as the strategic defensive, during which the overall concerns are survival and mobilization. It is characterized by organization, infiltration, recruitment, indoctrination and preparation. Military attacks are engaged in rarely and selectively—limited to harassing action in the enemy's rear areas and isolated posts. AQAP's strategy up until the Christmas Day plot seemed to follow the same logic. Mao's second stage, known as the strategic stalemate, requires an expansion of military operations against isolated outposts, government assets, and columns. In the second stage, insurgents begin to hold territory to establish and consolidate base areas. The third phase—the strategic offensive—involves the conversion into conventional mobile and positional warfare. The countryside is consolidated, the cities surrounded, and the government is challenged openly in battle and toppled. See Mao Tse-Tung and Samuel B. Griffith, *On Guerrilla Warfare* (Chicago: Urbana and Chicago University Press, 2000); Robert Taber, *War of the Flea* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2002).

<sup>53</sup> Hatitha.

<sup>54</sup> Gregory Johnsen, "Waning Vigilance: Al-Qaeda's Resurgence in Yemen," The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, July 14, 2009.

<sup>55</sup> The differences between the two countries that would need to be considered in a broader study include demographics, political culture, sectarian affiliations of the governing regimes, the relationship between the state and tribes, and geography.

## Indonesia's Case Against Abu Bakar Bashir

By Arabinda Acharya and Fatima Astuti

ON AUGUST 9, 2010, Abu Bakar Bashir, the head of Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT) and the alleged spiritual leader of Jemaah Islamiya (JI), was arrested for involvement in terrorist activities. His arrest followed the discovery of a terrorist training camp in Aceh Province and the detention of three senior members of JAT.<sup>1</sup> Bashir is now on extended remand until December 13, 2010, while the prosecution prepares to indict him for his role in the Aceh camp.<sup>2</sup> Police claim to have strong evidence based on testimonies, documents, and videos that link Bashir to terrorist activity in the camp. Bashir is also accused of being the *amir* or spiritual leader of the cross organizational jihadist coalition known as al-Qa`ida Serambi Mekkah in Aceh.<sup>3</sup>

Bashir's latest arrest has a number of implications. Many Indonesians think that the arrest is an attempt by authorities to restrict freedom of speech and religion in the country. The Indonesian government, for example, has already prosecuted Bashir on two previous occasions. In October 2002, Bashir was arrested for his alleged involvement in the Christmas Eve bombings of 2000 and a conspiracy to kill President Megawati Sukarnoputri. Authorities, however, were only able to convict and sentence Bashir on immigration violations. On the day of his prison release on April 30, 2004, he was arrested again, this time for involvement in the Bali bombings of October 2002 and the Marriott Hotel bombings of August 2003. He was found guilty of conspiracy, but not direct involvement in the plots, and was only sentenced to 30 months in prison. He was released on June 14, 2006 after a four month reduction in sentence.<sup>4</sup> It is

<sup>1</sup> "Indonesian Police Alleged Bashir Was Instrumental in Establishing Aceh Terror Group," *Jakarta Globe*, August 11, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> "JAT: Perpanjang Penahanan Ba'asyir Berlebihan," *Viva News*, August 17, 2010.

<sup>3</sup> "Court Told Indonesian Preacher Funded Militant Camp," *Agence France-Presse*, October 28, 2010.

<sup>4</sup> "Ba'asyir Quits Jihad Fighters Group MMI," *Jakarta Post*, August 5, 2008.

likely that the coming trial of Bashir will once again test Indonesia's frail anti-terrorism legal regime. Analysts are already concerned that the government does not have enough evidence to convict Bashir of the latest charges.

This article details the prosecution's allegations against Bashir, while also showing why his conviction will be difficult to achieve under Indonesia's current anti-terrorism legislation.

#### Bashir's Role in Terrorist Training in Aceh

On September 17, 2008, Bashir formed JAT after officially resigning from Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI) in July 2008.<sup>5</sup> He accused MMI's leadership of being "un-Islamic" because it favored democracy over Shari`a (Islamic law).<sup>6</sup> JAT, which literally means the defender of the oneness of God, is primarily supported by former MMI members aligned to Bashir. Bashir claimed that his new organization would implement true Islamic teachings.<sup>7</sup> Authorities believe that JAT organized members from JI, Darul Islam, the Action Committee for Crisis Response (KOMPAK), and Aceh's Islamic Defender Front (FPI) to create a new coalition called al-Qa`ida Serambi Mekkah.

The police account of Bashir's role in the Aceh camp is based on the confession of Ubeid (also known as Luthfi Haidaroh), who was arrested in Medan on April 12, 2010.<sup>8</sup> Ubeid was an acquaintance of Noordin Mohamed Top and was involved in several bombings.<sup>9</sup> He was arrested in July 2004, sentenced to prison, and was released in 2007. He met Bashir during his imprisonment in Cipinang

5 MMI was established on August 7, 2000 with a mandate from the Indonesian Mujahidin Congress in Yogyakarta. The Congress, which lasted from August 5-7, 2000, attracted more than 1,800 participants from 24 provinces in Indonesia. MMI is a hard line umbrella organization that wants to implement Islamic law in Indonesia through legal and constitutional means. See "Mundur dari MMI, Bulan Ramadhan Ustad Ba'asyir Bentuk Organisasi Baru," *Era Muslim*, August 8, 2008.

6 Muhammad Haniff Hassan and Mohamed Redzuan Salleh, "Abu Bakar Bashir: Jihad or Tyranny of Leadership?" RSIS Commentaries, October 9, 2008.

7 "Bashir Declares New Political Islamist Group," *Jakarta Post*, September 17, 2008.

8 "Lagi, Densus Bekuk Tiga Tersangka," *Radar Lampung*, May 15, 2010.

9 "Terrorism in Indonesia: Noordin's Network," International Crisis Group, May 5, 2006.

Prison where he accepted Bashir as his mentor.<sup>10</sup> Later, Ubeid joined JAT as a member of its executive council.

Based on Ubeid's statements, Bashir's involvement in the training camp began in February 2009 when Ubeid asked Bashir to meet Dulmatin, another JI acquaintance.<sup>11</sup> Dulmatin was hiding out with the Abu Sayyaf Group in the Philippines after having fled Indonesia following the Bali bombings of October 2002, but he slipped back into Indonesia

**"Although the charges against Bashir appear formidable, there are a number of pitfalls that could result in an unsuccessful conviction, which would further serve to highlight the weaknesses in Indonesia's legal regime against terrorism."**

in 2009 without the knowledge of the Indonesian and Philippine governments.<sup>12</sup> Ubeid and Dulmatin supposedly met Bashir at a house in Ngruki, at which time Bashir allegedly gave his consent to conduct military training in Aceh and asked Dulmatin to work with Abu Tholut.<sup>13</sup> Abu Tholut was a former regional commander of JI and a military trainer at JI's Hudaibiyah camp in the Philippines.<sup>14</sup> Subsequently, Abu Tholut was appointed as a member of JAT's executive council.<sup>15</sup> Bashir also allegedly appointed Dulmatin as the field commander of the Aceh camp.<sup>16</sup>

10 "Indonesia: The Dark Side of Jama'ah Anshorut Tauhid," International Crisis Group, July 6, 2010.

11 Farouk Arnaz and Nurfika Osman, "Police Confident Bashir Won't Escape Terror Charges Again," *Jakarta Globe*, August 19, 2010.

12 "Dulmatin Sudah Latih Perakit Bom," *Jambi Independent*, March 11, 2010.

13 "Ba'asyir's Telling Telephone Call," *Tempo*, August 18-24, 2010.

14 "Exclusive: Terror Arrests Linked to Abu Bakar Bashir Organization," *Jakarta Globe*, May 7, 2010.

15 "Indonesia: The Dark Side of Jama'ah Anshorut Tauhid."

16 "Polisi Kantongi Video Ba'asyir Tinjau Latihan Teror-

Ubeid told police that in mid-2009 he visited Bashir to seek financial assistance for the camp. Bashir reportedly provided \$558 and asked Ubeid to meet with Thoib, JAT's treasurer, who then provided Ubeid \$1,116.<sup>17</sup> In November 2009, Bashir allegedly gave \$20,000 and \$5,000 while Thoib gave another \$2,287 to Ubeid.<sup>18</sup> Dulmatin also received \$1,116 from Thoib in early 2010. Moreover, some of JAT's Darul Islam members provided financial assistance as well for the Aceh training camp.<sup>19</sup>

Besides financial assistance, Bashir is believed to have named the training camp in Aceh as Tandzim al-Qa`ida Serambi Mekkah.<sup>20</sup> He also allegedly designed an organizational structure that consisted of three sub-structures (*qadi*) led respectively by Dulmatin, Abu Yusuf and Ardi. Each *qadi* had 10 members.<sup>21</sup> Bashir reportedly received progress reports, including a number of videos, from the training coordinator in Aceh.<sup>22</sup> He allegedly visited the Aceh camp to monitor the training.

#### The Challenges of Convicting Bashir

Bashir now faces five counts of charges involving terrorism, with a maximum sentence of life in prison or the death penalty.<sup>23</sup> The prosecution is preparing to charge Bashir under multiple sections of the 2003 Anti-Terrorism Law. One of the main thrusts of the charges is proving that Bashir is an "intellectual actor" under section 14 of the law that refers to any person who plans and/or incites another to commit acts of terrorism. He will also be charged under section

ris Aceh," *Tempo*, August 11, 2010; "Evidence' Links Bashir to Aceh Camp," *Straits Times*, August 11, 2010. Dulmatin was shot dead during a police raid in Jakarta on March 9, 2010. For details, see "Bali Bomber Dulmatin Killed in Raid, Yudhoyono Said," Bloomberg, March 10, 2010.

17 "Ba'asyir's Telling Telephone Call."

18 Ibid.

19 "Indonesia: The Dark Side of Jama'ah Anshorut Tauhid."

20 "Ba'asyir's Telling Telephone Call."

21 "The Amir's Network," *Tempo*, August 18-24, 2010.

22 According to one report, a video could exist showing footage of Bashir watching training in the Aceh camp. Another report, however, says that the video was about training in Aceh which was sent to Bashir. See "Abu Bakar Ba'asyir Faces Life Imprisonment or Death," *Tempo*, August 11, 2010; "Polisi Kantongi Video Ba'asyir Tinjau Latihan Teroris Aceh."

23 Ibid.

13 with sub-sections a, b, and c that covers the provision of money or other assets for acts of terrorism, harboring a perpetrator of a terrorist act, and hiding information on any act of terrorism, respectively. Although the charges against Bashir appear formidable, there are a number of pitfalls that could result in an unsuccessful conviction, which would further serve to highlight the weaknesses in Indonesia's legal regime against terrorism.

First, except for what Ubeid told the police, there does not appear to be irrefutable evidence proving Bashir's involvement in the Aceh camp.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, Ubeid's statement to the police has to be sustained in judicial proceedings to be considered acceptable evidence. There is a possibility that Ubeid will change his statement during court proceedings. In Bashir's second trial, Ali Imron—one of the accused—changed his statement and refused to recognize Bashir as the leader of JI.<sup>25</sup> The court also did not accept video conference testimony from a Singapore detainee who categorically recognized Bashir as the leader of JI.

Moreover, in his public statements, Bashir has claimed to be against violent jihad. His statements, however, appear more ambivalent. For example, in an interview in 2005 about the perpetrators of the Bali bombings, Bashir said,

I call those who carried out these actions all mujahid. They all had a good intention (*niat*), that is, jihad in Allah's way...They are right that America is the proper target because America fights Islam. So in terms of their objectives, they are right, and the target of their attacks was right also. But their calculations are debatable. My view is that we should do bombings in conflict areas (war zones) not in peace areas. We have to target the place of the enemy, not countries where many Muslims live.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup> It is not clear if there are other depositions from those arrested at the camp. Police have not mentioned if these contain any evidence about Bashir's involvement. See "Polisi Kantongi Video Ba'asyir Tinjau Latihan Teroris Aceh."

<sup>25</sup> "Ali Imron: Tidak ada Restu Ba'asyir untuk Mengembom Bali," *Detik News*, January 20, 2005.

<sup>26</sup> This information is based on an interview with Bashir

In another interview after his recent arrest, Bashir maintained that irrespective of the means, *i'dad* (preparation for jihad) is right for the implementation of Shari'a, although the use of weapons could be morally indefensible.<sup>27</sup>

Bashir's supporters also claim that the training camp in Aceh was designed to prepare mujahidin to go to conflict zones such as Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan. They argue that if there was a plan to attack targets in Indonesia, their leader was unaware of it. The same has been the case with JAT, which, as an organization, has maintained a non-violent stance in public. In a statement, Bashir's successor in JAT, Muhammad Achwan, maintained,

We have actually been under physical attack from the police's anti-terror squad Detachment 88. Those who can fight back are permitted to use violence as long as they have the necessary resources and capabilities. For those who do not yet have the necessary resources to wage violent confrontation, they should wait and remain patient as their time will come. The battle still has a long way to go. Islam is not demanding [that] we win immediately, but fight and act regardless of the result.<sup>28</sup>

Therefore, both individually and as the leader of JAT, there could be difficulties in implicating Bashir as an "intellectual actor" supporting terrorist activities.

Second, police claim to have material evidence linking Bashir to the Aceh camp, such as proof of bank account transfers and recorded telephone conversations. Ubeid, however, said that the money was physically transferred in cash and not through bank wires.<sup>29</sup> If this is true,

by Taufiq Andrie, whose questions were formulated by Scott Atran. For the document, visit [www.sitemaker.umich.edu/satran/files/atrana\\_asyirinterview020905.pdf](http://www.sitemaker.umich.edu/satran/files/atrana_asyirinterview020905.pdf).

<sup>27</sup> "Ustadz Abu Bakar Bashir: America Wants Me Removed from Society," September 5, 2010, available on various websites.

<sup>28</sup> "Violent Jihad is Tolerated for Those Who Have Resources: JAT leader," *Jakarta Post*, August 27, 2010.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

the prosecution will be unable to link Bashir's finances to the training camp except to the extent substantiated by Ubeid's testimony. In a previous case involving the hotel bombings in Jakarta in 2009, prosecutors failed to establish a direct link between the money given by an alleged Saudi financier, Ali Abdullah

## **"Bashir also allegedly appointed Dulmatin as the field commander of the Aceh camp."**

al-Khalaewi, and Syaifudin, the man who recruited the suicide bombers. This was largely due to the legal ambiguity in the Anti-Terrorism Law and Anti-Money Laundering Act, both of which also deal with terrorist financing. The acts are relatively vague about what constitutes employment of money for terrorist activity. This has resulted in myriad interpretations and subjective applications of the provisions of the act. Additionally, because JI and its offshoots such as JAT are not proscribed, it is not possible to criminalize funding these organizations.<sup>30</sup>

Third, proving that Bashir was the "intellectual actor" behind the training camp in Aceh will also depend on establishing, beyond doubt, his leadership in al-Qa'ida Serambi Mekkah. This appears to be an onerous task given the fact that the main accused collaborator—Dulmatin—was killed in a police raid in March 2010, and Abu Tholut is in hiding.<sup>31</sup> There do not appear to be any other witnesses who can testify to this allegation.

### **Conclusion**

If the prosecution fails to prove Bashir's involvement in the terrorist training camp in Aceh, he is sure to gain more sympathy from the broader public to support his lifelong accusation that the government is acting at the

<sup>30</sup> Arabinda Acharya and Fatima Astuti, "Chink in the Armour: Tightening Jakarta's Counter Terrorist Financing Regime," S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, July 2010. It is not exactly clear why the government has not banned JI, and it could be for political reasons.

<sup>31</sup> "Bali Bomber Dulmatin Killed in Raid, Yudhoyono Said," Bloomberg, March 10, 2010.

behest of the United States to restrict his "legitimate" religious activities. Unfortunately, if failure does occur, it will not be due to the incompetence of Indonesia's counterterrorism units such as Detachment 88 and the police. By any account, their activities have been commendable in containing the threat of terrorism. Instead, the ultimate outcome will depend on the overall legal regime against terrorism that remains weak and debilitated in Indonesia. As a result, the field is wide open for extremists such as Bashir to continue with their activities unhindered.

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## Recent Highlights in Terrorist Activity

September 1, 2010 (UNITED STATES): The United States placed Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan on its terrorism blacklist. The group's two top leaders, Hakimullah Mehsud and Waliur Rahman, were also identified as "specially designated global terrorists." - *AP, September 1*

September 1, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): A bomb killed Mohammad Hassan Taimuri, a senior Afghan government official in charge of organizing pilgrimages to the Islamic holy sites of Mecca and Medina. He was assassinated in Kandahar city. - *Fox News, September 1*

September 1, 2010 (PAKISTAN): Three suicide bombers exploded among a procession of Shi'a Muslims in Lahore, killing more than 30 people. Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan claimed responsibility for the attack. - *BBC, September 1; CNN, September 2*

September 1, 2010 (ALGERIA): A suicide bomber drove an explosives-laden vehicle into a military convoy near Zemmouri, 25 miles east of Algiers. Two soldiers were killed. - *Reuters, September 1; AFP, September 2*

September 2, 2010 (PAKISTAN): Militants ambushed and killed a female teacher in Bajaur Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Two colleagues of the slain teacher were wounded. - *AFP, September 2*

September 3, 2010 (GLOBAL): Qari Hussain Mehsud, a Taliban operative known as the "trainer of suicide bombers," threatened to launch attacks on the United States and Europe "very soon." He also said, "Shiites are also our target because they too are our enemies." - *Telegraph, September 3; Reuters, September 3*

September 3, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber detonated explosives near a mosque belonging to the minority Ahmadi sect in Mardan District, killing at least one person. - *RFE/RL, September 4*

September 3, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber targeted a procession of Shi'a Muslims in Quetta, Baluchistan

Province, killing more than 60 people. According to *Dawn*, both Lashkar-i-Jhangvi and Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan claimed responsibility for the attack.

- *RFE/RL, September 4; Dawn, September 4; CNN, September 4*

September 3, 2010 (PAKISTAN): Two suspected U.S. drone strikes killed at least 12 people in North Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. One strike targeted a house with suspected militants inside on the outskirts of Miran Shah, while the other destroyed a car traveling through Datta Khel. - *AAJ News, September 3*

September 3, 2010 (TAJIKISTAN): A suicide bomber in an explosives-laden vehicle drove into a police station in the northern city of Khujand, killing a senior police official. Authorities blamed the bombing on the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, yet a previously unknown group called Jamaat Ansarullah in Tajikistan claimed responsibility. - *AFP, September 3; Reuters, September 9*

September 4, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): A bomb attached to a motorcycle detonated in the northern city of Kunduz, killing four Afghan policemen and three civilians. - *AFP, September 4*

September 4, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A suspected U.S. aerial drone targeted a house and vehicle near Miran Shah in North Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, killing five militants. - *Daily Times, September 5*

September 5, 2010 (IRAQ): Five suicide bombers and at least one other assailant launched a sophisticated attack on Iraqi Army facilities in central Baghdad, killing approximately 12 people. - *AFP, September 5; Wall Street Journal, September 6*

September 5, 2010 (RUSSIA): A suicide bomber detonated an explosives-laden vehicle at a military firing range in Dagestan, killing four soldiers. The bomber entered the secure facility by ramming his vehicle through the security gate. - *New York Times, September 5; Wall Street Journal, September 6*

September 6, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber rammed an explosives-laden vehicle into a police station in Lakki Marwat District of Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa Province, killing at least 19 people. The Pakistani Taliban claimed responsibility. - *AFP, September 5; BBC, September 6*

September 6, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A suspected U.S. aerial drone fired two missiles at a vehicle in the Datta Khel area of North Waziristan Agency, killing five militants. - *AFP, September 6*

September 6, 2010 (TAJIKISTAN): A bomb ripped through a nightclub frequented by locals in Dushanbe, wounding five people. Authorities blamed radical Islamists, although the party responsible was not immediately clear. - *Reuters, September 6*

September 7, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A bomb ripped through a police headquarters in Kohat District of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Province, killing at least 20 people. - *Radio France International, September 8*

September 8, 2010 (IRAQ): Four prisoners with ties to al-Qa`ida in Iraq escaped from the U.S.-controlled section of Baghdad's Karkh prison, formerly known as Camp Cropper. - *BBC, September 9*

September 8, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A suspected U.S. aerial drone fired missiles at a house owned by a member of the Haqqani network in North Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Six militants were killed. - *AP, September 8*

September 8, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A suspected U.S. aerial drone targeted a car transporting men associated with the Haqqani network in North Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Four militants were killed. - *AP, September 8*

September 9, 2010 (RUSSIA): A suicide bomber detonated an explosives-laden vehicle outside a busy market in Vladikavkaz in North Ossetia. At least 16 people were killed. The Battalion of Martyrs Riyadus-Salikhiyn claimed responsibility for the attack. - *Los Angeles Times, September 10; Reuters, September 17*

September 9, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber tried to assassinate Mir Asim Kurd, the finance minister for Baluchistan Province. Kurd survived the attack, but three other people were killed. - *Dawn, September 10*

September 9, 2010 (PAKISTAN): Police in Pakistan arrested three suspects over links to the failed Times Square bombing in New York City on May 1, 2010. The men were reportedly detained in Islamabad two weeks ago. - *Australia Network News, September 9*

September 9, 2010 (SOMALIA): A suicide bomber in a vehicle exploded at the gate to Mogadishu's airport, killing at least 14 people. Two other suicide bombers on foot tried to enter the terminal building, but failed. At the time of the bombing, a high-ranking international delegation was meeting with leaders of Somalia's Transitional Federal Government at the airport. - *GaroweOnline, September 9; al-Jazeera, September 10*

September 10, 2010 (DENMARK): Authorities arrested a man in downtown Copenhagen after he apparently detonated a bomb in the restroom of the busy Hotel Jørgensen. Media reports speculated that the man may have been a suicide bomber. The man survived injuries sustained from the bomb explosion. - *BBC, September 10*

September 12, 2010 (RUSSIA): Gapal Gadzhiev, a leading counterterrorism official, was assassinated in Dagestan. - *Voice of America, September 12*

September 12, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber's explosives detonated prematurely in Pakistan-administered Kashmir. The bomber, who died in the blast, was identified as a local resident. There were no other casualties. - *AFP, September 12*

September 14, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A suspected U.S. aerial drone killed at least 10 militants in Shawal district of North Waziristan Agency in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. - *Voice of America, September 14*

September 14, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A suspected U.S. aerial drone targeted a vehicle near Miran Shah in North Waziristan Agency, killing four militants. - *Voice of America, September 14*

September 15, 2010 (GLOBAL): Al-Qa`ida second-in-command Ayman al-Zawahiri released a new audiotape, stating, "Nine years after the beginning of the crusade against Afghanistan and then Iraq, here is the crusade reeling after being weakened by the blows of your devoted sons, the mujahidin." He also railed against the "corrupt state of affairs in Pakistan." - *AFP, September 15*

September 16, 2010 (NIGER): Militants abducted seven foreigners, including five French nationals, from northern Niger's uranium mining zone. The hostages are employees of French construction company Vinci and nuclear energy firm Areva. Al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb claimed responsibility. - *Reuters, September 16; BBC, September 17; AFP, September 21*

September 17, 2010 (JORDAN): Authorities in Jordan reportedly detained Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, a prominent Islamist leader and the former mentor of Abu Mus`ab al-Zarqawi. - *AP, September 19*

September 18, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): Afghanistan held its second parliamentary elections. - *New York Times, September 18*

September 18, 2010 (SOMALIA): Al-Shabab and Hisbul Islamiyya insurgents seized control of Horn Afrik and GBC radio stations in Mogadishu. - *BBC, September 19*

September 19, 2010 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber killed six people, including three Iraqi soldiers, in Falluja, Anbar Province. - *AFP, September 19*

September 19, 2010 (PHILIPPINES): Philippine militants reportedly killed Abdulkarim Sali, a member of the Abu Sayyaf Group who helped plan and execute the kidnapping of three Americans and 17 Filipinos from a popular resort in 2001. - *New York Times, September 19*

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September 20, 2010 (FRANCE): France raised its terrorism threat level due to concern of an imminent attack from al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb. – *Telegraph, September 20; Voice of America, September 22*

September 20, 2010 (SOMALIA): A suicide bomber detonated his explosives at the gates of the presidential palace in Mogadishu, wounding two soldiers. – *Reuters, September 20*

September 21, 2010 (YEMEN): Yemeni authorities announced a wide-scale offensive against al-Qa`ida in the country's southeastern province of Shabwa. – *CNN, September 21*

September 23, 2010 (UNITED STATES): A New York district court sentenced Aafia Siddiqui, a U.S.-educated Pakistani neuroscientist, to 86 years in prison for trying to shoot U.S. soldiers in a police station in Afghanistan in 2008. – *Christian Science Monitor, September 23*

September 23, 2010 (INDONESIA): Mohammed Sofyan Tsauri, a former Indonesian police officer, told authorities that he helped train 170 members of a new terrorist network in Aceh Province. Tsauri, who is being charged for multiple crimes, said that he became "affiliated with al-Qa`ida" after he left the police force in 2008. – *AP, September 23*

September 24, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): Multiple suicide bombers attacked a NATO base in Paktia Province, but there were no ISAF casualties. At least five militants were killed in the attempt to breach the perimeter of the base in Gardez. – *Reuters, September 24*

September 24, 2010 (RUSSIA): A suicide bomber wounded at least 30 people in Dagestan. The bomber detonated his explosives after approaching police. – *Dawn, September 25; CNN, September 25*

September 25, 2010 (RUSSIA): Russian counterterrorist forces killed Alibek Abunazarov, identified as the head of a rebel group in Dagestan. – *Reuters, September 25*

September 25, 2010 (YEMEN): Two alleged al-Qa`ida fighters ambushed a bus carrying Yemeni security personnel in Sana`a, injuring 10 people after spraying bullets at the vehicle. The gunmen then fled. – *AP, September 25*

September 26, 2010 (SOMALIA): An unidentified military helicopter attacked a house reportedly used by al-Shabab fighters in Somalia's Lower Shabelle region. The helicopter appeared to have originated from warships off Somalia's coast. – *New York Times, September 26*

September 27, 2010 (PAKISTAN): A suspected U.S. aerial drone killed four militants in North Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. – *AFP, September 27*

September 28, 2010 (FRANCE): French authorities temporarily evacuated the Eiffel Tower in Paris due to terrorism concerns. – *UPI, September 28*

September 28, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber assassinated Mohammad Kazim Allahyar, the deputy governor of Ghazni Province. The blast also killed five additional people. – *France24, September 28*

September 29, 2010 (SPAIN): Spanish authorities announced the arrest of a U.S. citizen suspected of sending money to al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb. The suspect, Mohamed Omar Debhi, is of Algerian descent and was arrested in Barcelona. On September 30, however, authorities released Debhi due to lack of evidence, although the investigation is still open. – *BBC, September 29; Wall Street Journal, October 1*

September 29, 2010 (YEMEN): Suspected al-Qa`ida fighters ambushed a convoy of cars that were carrying the governor of Shabwa Province along with senior Yemeni security officials. The governor was not injured, although one of the convoy's guards was killed. – *AP, September 29*

September 30, 2010 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber in a vehicle detonated his explosives next to a NATO convoy in Kandahar, killing three civilians. – *Reuters, September 30*